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THere is lately Re-printed, *An Help and Exhortation to Worthy Communicating*. Or, a *Treatiſe* deſcribing the Meaning, Worthy Reception, Duty, and Benefits of the *Holy Sacrament*. And Anſwering the *Doubts of Conſcience*, and *other Reaſons*, which moſt generally detain Men from it. Together with *Suitable Devotions* added. By *John Kettlewell*, Vicar of *Coles-hill* in *Warwickſhire*. The Second Edition.

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THE Practical Believer: OR, THE ARTICLES OF THE Apostles Creed,

Drawn out

To form a True Christian's Heart, and Practice.

In Two Parts.

LONDON,

Printed for *Robert Kettlewell*, and are to be Sold by *R. Clavel* at the *Peacock* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, and *W. Rogers* at the *Sun* over against St. *Dunstan's* Church in *Fleet-street*. MDCLXXXVIII.

Place this Sheet before Page 1.

THE PREFACE.

Reader,

I Here preſent thee with a Diſcourſe upon the Holy Chriſtian Faith: which as we all profeſs ſeriouſly to believe; ſo ſhould we carefully endeavour to anſwer, and adorn, with an Holy and Chriſtian Practice. In this, I have endeavoured to give ſuch accounts of Almighty God, as may encourage all good Men to love and ſerve him; and deter all evil Men, from preſuming on his Favour, or

provoking his Diſpleaſure. I have drawn out the conſideration of his Providence, into the uſual caſes and occurrences, and ſhown how we may live upon it, and give our ſelves the true comfort and advantage thereof, in all events and tranſactions. And all the other Articles of the Creed, I have endeavoured to ſet off in ſuch particulars, as we are moſt concerned to know, and which may give them the greateſt life, and power with us. In the whole, I have aim'd to lay before thee the ſumm of Chriſtian Doctrine, that in an Age, which abounds with unchriſtian falſhoods, we may keep ſtedfaſt in Chriſtian Truths: and that among all the Truths of Chriſtianity, we may lay out our Care and Zeal on thoſe, which

which are moſt important, and worthy of all acceptance.

My great deſign in this Treatiſe, is to lend what help I am able, to thoſe, that ſincerely deſire, and ſeriouſly ſet themſelves to live as they believe, and to make Faith a Governing Grace: ſhowing how we may ſerve our ſelves of it, and give up our Souls to be ordered and directed by it, in all our manifold, and moſt important caſes and concerns. And looking all along at this mark, in paſſing through all the *Articles of the Creed*, I have not ſought to fill up a Book, by inſerting all that may be truly, or pertinently ſaid: But have applied my ſelf to inſtruct thee, in ſuch, as I thought the leading, and governing Noti-

ons; to inculcate thoſe, which ſeem to me the moſt concerning, and powerful Truths; to ſet off ſuch particulars about them, as ſeem fitteſt to affect us, or lie neareſt unto Practice; and to note wherein we are to follow and attend to them, in the courſe, and various exigencies of our lives. And hoping this may prove beneficial to the inſtruction, and uſe of plain Chriſtians, who have neither leiſure to peruſe, nor capacity to retain larger Volumes; I have endeavoured to treat of theſe things with convenient brevity. But withal to comprize ſo much, not only of neceſſary, but profitable Doctrine, as may be ſufficient to any Man's guidance and encouragement, who will ſet himſelf diligently to learn, and walk in the light of it. I am

I am not without hopes, that this Diſcourſe may, in ſome degree or other, ſerve the end, for which it is ſincerely ſent abroad, *viz.* of doing ſome honour and ſervice to the ever Bleſſed Trinity, and making an admirable, and moſt efficacious Faith, more lively and powerful in ſome, that profeſs it. And if thou, good Reader, ſhalt reap any benefit by it, as thou wilt not fail to give God the praiſe, for ſuiting and ſupplying thy neceſſity, by the weakneſs of any he employs: ſo one thing I heartily requeſt of thee, which is all the return, that in this World I either expect, or deſire, that thou wilt thus far remember the poor inſtrument of thy Mercy, as in the fervency of

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The

THE Practical Believer.

The First Part.

OF THE NATURE and CERTAINTY OF Christian Faith, AND *The Knowledge of God:* OR, AN Explication of the Divine Attributes, and Providence.

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PART I.

Of the Nature, and Certainty of Christian Faith, &c.

CHAP. I.

Of Christian Faith.

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What is meant by Faith in Christ. When this suitably affects us, it justifies, or avails to Righteousness. An account of several particulars of Christian Belief, with the respective Affections, and Practices, that are suitable to them. All these are reasonably to be expected from them, though they do not follow where Men will act inconsistently to their Principles, and against Reason. Faith with its suitable effects, the same as Faith and Repentance. On this account such effects ascribed to it, when alone, as are due only to it and Repentance in conjunction. This Faith with its suitable effects, was that which justified the

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Queſtion. SInce Men are made to live for ever, and have Souls capable of Eternal Salvation, What muſt they do to ſave them?

Anſwer. Believe in Chriſt, and *repent.* For Faith, and Obedience, which, where Men have ſinn'd before, is call'd Repentance, are the conditions of Salvation.

Queſt. Is Faith in *Chriſt* one thing neceſſary to Salvation?

Anſ. Yes. *He that heareth my word*, ſays our Saviour, *is paſſed from death unto life, and ſhall not come into condemnation*, John 5. 24. *He that believeth the Goſpel, and is baptized,*

ſhall

shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned, Mark 16. 16.

Quest. Will all Faith save Men?

Ans. No; for *the Devils* themselves *believe*, says S. *James*, Jam. 2. 19. But the saving Faith, is only that which suitably affects us, and works Repentance: Repentance, as well as Faith, being necessary to Eternal Happiness.

Quest Since Faith is in it self one part of the condition of our Happiness, and instrumental also to work the Rest, it is necessary to understand well what it is, and wherein a saving Faith differs from other sorts of Faith. Pray what is meant by *Faith in Christ?*

Ans. In general, it is *the believing all, that is declared to us by Christ:* and sometimes more particularly *some things, that are declared of him.* The *believing what is said by him*, is called Faith in *Christ*, as his Authority and Credit is the Ground, and Reason of our Belief: and the *believing things said of him*, as he himself is the object of it. And when this belief suitably affects us, and we so resolve, and practise thereupon, as may be reasonably expected from Persons under such Persuasions, then is it imputed to us for Righteousness.

Quest. Is Faith in *Christ*, believing all that is declared to us by *Christ*, or a giving trust and credit to his Word?

Ans. Yes, and so the Scriptures intimate, when they call it *faith* † *of Christ*, that is, of his †Gal. 2. 20. Phil. 3. 9.

his Teaching and Directing; and, as it is
* Act. 18. 8. ſometimes in the Original, *faith* * *to Chriſt*,
† Mar. 1. 15. & Phil. 1. 27. that is, to him teſtifying and declaring; and Faith or *belief of the* † *Goſpel*, and *of the* * *truth*, the Goſpel being that Word of
* 2 Theſſ. 2. 13. Heb. 1. 2. truth, which, on his Credit and Authority, he teſtifies and declares to us. Beſides,
† Joh. 12. 47. 48. Faith or Belief in *Chriſt*, is expreſſed in Scripture by theſe ſeveral Phraſes, of † *hearing and receiving the word of Chriſt*, of * *receiving*
* Act. 11. 1. † Jo. 1. 12. *the word of God*, of † *receiving Chriſt*, of * *re-*
* Jo. 3. 33. † Jo. 5. 35, 37, 64, 65. *ceiving the teſtimony of Chriſt*, of † *coming unto Chriſt*. All which, as is evident from the places alledged, being made only ſo many other words for believing, ſhow plainly that Faith or Belief, is the crediting of his Word, and aſſenting to thoſe things, that are declared by him. Which declarations, for their ſurer derivation to After-times, were all put in Writing by his Holy *Apoſtles* and *Evangeliſts* before their Deaths, and are all contain'd in the *Holy Scriptures*.

Queſt. Indeed, if Faith in *Chriſt* be a *belief of Chriſt's word*, it plainly implies *hearing*, and *receiving it*: and that Word being ſent down to us by him from *God*, receiving it, is a *receiving the word of God*; and believing it on *Chriſt's* Authority, is *receiving his teſtimony*. But how do the two other Phraſes, of *receiving Chriſt*, and *coming unto Chriſt*, ſhew the Faith they denote to be a belief of his Word?

Anſ.

Anſ. To *receive one*, notes different things, as it is apply'd to different caſes. Men receive a Gueſt, when they entertain him in their Houſes; a Ruler, when they become his ſubjects; a Friend, when they admit him to intimacies; but a Prophet and Teacher, under which notion *Chriſt* claims belief, when they *credit his Doctrine and Meſſage.* And becauſe they who thus believ'd him, came perſonally to attend and learn of him, and aſſociated themſelves with him, as they that retain'd to, and followed him; therefore was this belief of him, in a literal ſenſe, *a coming to him.*

Queſt. Doth Faith in *Chriſt* ſignifie alſo in Scripture, the believing ſome things concerning *Chriſt?*

Anſ. Yes, and thoſe too ſuch things, as are apt to beget truſt, and confidence in him. For ſo, though *the Devils* know and *believe* the truth of all *Chriſt* has declared, yet S. *James* ſays they want the right Faith, becauſe they only *tremble* at it, and cannot hope in the leaſt, that ever he will do them any good, *Jam.* 2. 19.

Queſt. What are we thus particularly to believe concerning *Chriſt?*

Anſ. Not only in the general, That *he is the Son of God*, and *the Chriſt* or Meſſiah, for profeſſing whereof S. *Peter* was pronounced *Bleſſed*, Mat. 16. 16, 17. but alſo particularly, to believe that he *died for our ſins*, to reconcile us unto God by his Death, whence it is eſpecially called *faith in his blood*, Ro. 3. 25.

That

That he *roſe again from the dead*, which whoſo *believes in his heart*, ſays S. *Paul*, *ſhall be ſaved*, Rom. 10. 9. And that he is now aſcended into Heaven, and ſeated on the right Hand of God, there to intercede and mediate for us, till at laſt he ſhall come again to judge the World, and eternally reward or puniſh all, according as their lives have been good or bad.

Queſt. So that I perceive *Faith in Chriſt*, is our believing the Goſpel, and all things contained therein, concerning God, our Selves, or another World, upon *Chriſt*'s Authority. And particularly, believing what he therein declares concerning his being the *Chriſt* and Son of God, who died, roſe again, aſcended to God's right Hand, and ſhall return again to judge the World, as is alſo expreſſed in the *Creed*. And that for the ſake of his death to expiate ſins, God will be reconciled to Sinners upon their true Repentance?

Anſ. Yes, this is the true Faith in *Chriſt*, upon profeſſion whereof the *Apoſtles* at firſt enter'd Men as *Diſciples*, S. *Peter* without more ado *Baptizing the three thouſand that gladly receiv'd the Word*, wherein he had declared to them thoſe very things, *Act.* 2. 41. And the Chriſtian Church ever ſince admitting them to *Baptiſm*, upon their profeſſing Faith of the *Apoſtles Creed*, which contains the ſame particulars.

Queſt.

Queſt. By this I perceive what Faith in *Chriſt* is. Pray what wants this to make it ſaving and available unto Righteouſneſs?

Anſ. Only that it ſuitably affect us, or work in us ſuch Godly Affections, Purpoſes, and Practices, as may juſtly be expected from Men of ſuch perſuaſions.

Queſt. Pray what are theſe ſuitable affections?

Anſ. They will beſt appear, by running over briefly ſome of the chief of thoſe particulars, which we believe on the word of *Chriſt*, and which are to produce them in us.

Queſt. We believe that *God is our Father*, who at firſt made us, and ſtill preſerves, and provides for us, with Paternal care and tenderneſs. How muſt this affect us?

Anſ. With Love, Honour, and dutiful Obedience. *If I be a Father, where is my honour?* Mal. 1. 6.

Queſt. We believe him to be infinite in Juſtice, and Almighty in Power, able, and ready as to conſer whatſoever is deſirable on thoſe that fear, ſo to inflict whatſoever is dreadful on thoſe that affront him. What ſhould this beget in us?

Anſ. Reverence, and *godly fear. Fear him, who when he hath killed, hath Power to caſt both Body and Soul into Hell, yea, I ſay unto you fear him*, Luk. 12. 5. & Matth. 10. 28.

Queſt. We believe him to be perfectly Righteous, that is, moſt Holy, and Juſt, and True, and Faithful, and Merciful, and Patient,

Patient, and pleaſed only with what is ſo. How ought we in reaſon, to be influenced by this belief?

Anſ. Made Holy, and Righteous as he is, that ſo we may be like him the Supreme Object of all imitation, and find favour in his Eyes. *If we know that he is Righteous, we know that every one that doth Righteouſneſs, is born of him*, 1 Jo. 2. 29.

Queſt. We believe his Providence orders all events. What ſhould we do upon this?

Anſ. Be content under all that happens, and ſay, as the Holy *Pſalmiſt, I opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it*, Pſal. 39. 9. or, as old *Eli, It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good*, 1 Sam. 3. 18.

Queſt. We believe, that this Providence *will never leave, nor forſake* thoſe that fear God, *Heb.* 13. 5. that it will make all the evil they meet with here, *to work for their good*, Rom. 8. 28. That *the deſire of the Righteous ſhall be granted*, Prov. 10. 24. *That they ſhall not want any good thing*, Pſal. 34. 10. And that, when they *ſeek firſt the kingdom of God, all other things ſhall be added* to them, without their being *ſolicitous* about them, *Matth.* 6. 33, 34. What would one in reaſon expect, from Men ſo perſuaded?

Anſ. That they truſt in the living God, 1 Tim. 6. 17. that they lay aſide all diſtracting *ſolicitude*, and *thoughtfulneſs* for outward things, *Matth.* 6. 25, 31, 34. That they *be careful for nothing*, but making their caſe known to God,

God, *caſt all their care upon him, who careth for them*, Phil. 4. 6. & 1 Pet. 5. 7.

Queſt. We believe he will not forget his word, although the performance of it be long delaied, but remember it faithfully, and in due time give it effect. What ſhould this work in us?

Anſ. *Patience* and Perſeverance of Hope, whereof all *have need, that after they have done the will of God, they may receive the Promiſe:* It being God's way, for ſome time to exerciſe Mens Faith of a Promiſe, before he accompliſh it, *Heb.* 10. 36, 37.

Queſt. We believe he is able to fulfil it when it is moſt improbable, and unlike to take effect, there *being no word impoſſible with God*, Luk. 1. 37. and that he will do it. What ſhould be the effect of this?

Anſ. To beget in us a firm Faith, and unſhaken confidence in his Promiſe: ſuch as *Abraham's* was, for having a *Child*, when both *He* and his *Wife* were *paſt Age* for Children; and of having a numerous Iſſue by him, when at Gods command he was juſt about to *ſlay* him, *Rom.* 4. 20, 21. & *Heb.* 11. 19.

Queſt. We believe, that for *Chriſt's* ſake, God will give good things to thoſe, that ſeek to him for them, and that if *they ask, it ſhall be given*, Matth. 7. 7. What ſhould follow upon this opinion?

Anſ. Prayer and Devotion. So that whatſoever Temporal, or Spiritual Bleſſings Men ſtand in need of, they ſhould ſeek to God

God the Author, and by *Jeſus Chriſt* the procurer of them.

Queſt. We believe that *Jeſus* is the Son of God, and the *Chriſt* that was to come into the World. What would any ſerious, and conſiderate Man do, that is ſo perſuaded?

Anſ. Confide in him, and worſhip and ſubmit to him, as a moſt juſt Object of our Homage, Truſt, and Adoration.

Queſt. We believe this ſame *Jeſus* to be our Lord. What ſhould he in reaſon do, who believes and profeſſes that?

Anſ. Keep his Commandments, and obſerve his Orders. For *why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I ſay?* Luke 6.46.

Queſt. We believe that he came down from Heaven in love to us, to reſtore us to God's Favour, and Eternal Happineſs. What would any ingenuous Perſon do, that is convinced of this?

Anſ. Love him moſt dearly that ſo loved us, and thank him moſt heartily, and intirely, for having done, and ſuffered ſo much for our ſakes.

Queſt. We believe the cauſe of his dying ſo painful and ignominious a Death upon the Croſs, was not any ill that he had done himſelf, but only our ſins, and that at laſt they will bring us to Eternal Death, unleſs we repent of them. What can be expected of all that have this perſuaſion?

Anſ.

Anſ. Irreconcileably to hate ſin, and to repent and ſin no more, leſt they come to feel the ſame at laſt intolerably, and that too without all hopes of remedy, in their own Perſons. We muſt *die to ſin*, ſays the *Scripture*, ſince he *died for it*, Rom. 6. 6, 8, 11. And if *we judge* that *he died for us*, his *love*, as well as our own danger, will conſtrain us *not to live unto our ſelves, but unto him that died for us*, 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.

Queſt. We believe that he is now in Heaven at God's right Hand to preſent our Prayers, and intercede for us, and procure whatſoever we ſtand in need of. What effect ought this to have upon us?

Anſ. Make us look up to him with affiance in his Patronage, and apply to God by him with confidence in all our diſtreſſes. *Having ſuch an high-prieſt now paſſed into the heavens*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *let us come boldly unto the throne of grace*, Heb. 4. 14.

Queſt. We believe, that as by his Death he purchaſed, ſo in Heaven he is now taking up, and preparing Manſions of Eternal Bliſs, for all ſuch holy Souls, as, by purity of heart and life, are fit to partake of, and delight in them. What muſt every Man of this belief do, to be true to his own ſentiments?

Anſ. Purifie himſelf, that he may be meet to enjoy, and qualified to reliſh the immaculate pleaſures, of that pure, and ſpotleſs Place. *Every man, that hath this hope in him, purifies himſelf, even as he is pure*, 1 Jo. 3. 3.

Queſt. We believe, that at the *laſt day Chriſt will judge all men according to their deeds*, 2 Cor. 5. 10. Eternally rewarding all that are truly Pious, Humble, Temperate, Juſt, True, and Peaceable; and eternally condemning all that are otherwiſe. What ſhould every Perſon do in common care and prudence, that is fully perſuaded of this?

Anſ. Faithfully ſerve and fear God, who will call him to this ſtrict account. He ſhould *be ſober, and watch unto prayer*, 1 Pet. 4. 5, 7. and *be temperate in all things*, 1 Cor. 9. 25. and *owe nothing, but love, to any man*, Rom. 13. 8. and *follow peace with all men, and holineſs*; without which, no *man ſhall ſee the Lord*, Heb. 12. 14.

Queſt. We believe the Holy Ghoſt is ready to aſſiſt us in every good act, and help all, that will uſe his aid, to be as Holy, as God requires they ſhould be. What would all, that ſeriouſly attend to this belief, do upon it?

Anſ. Obey his motions, and concur with his aſſiſtances, and never wilfully do any thing, that will forfeit the aid and influence, of ſo deſireable, and Divine a Gueſt, as he is. *Have*, that is, uſe *Grace*, that *you may ſerve God acceptably*, Heb. 12. 28. *Work out your own ſalvation, for it is God that worketh in you*, Phil. 2. 12, 13. and *grieve not the Holy Spirit of God*, Eph. 4. 30.

Queſt. We believe the communion of Saints, which implies an obedient ſubmiſſion and adherence to our common Rulers,

lers, and particularly a communion in Prayers and Sacraments. What would God, or Men expect, from a Perſon of this belief?

Anſ. To keep the unity of the Church, and frequent the publick † Aſſemblies, where theſe Saints are to meet, and unite in all Divine Offices. † Heb. 10. 25.

Queſt. So that to name no more, theſe Points of Belief already mentioned, if duly attended to, would influence and act on all ſerious embracers of them, into love of God, and Honour, and godly Fear, and make them reſt contented in all eſtates, and truſt God with all Futurities, and have affiance in him in the greateſt Difficulties, and ſhew patience and perſeverance under the moſt tedious Delays, and purifie their Hearts and Lives, and render them univerſally Righteous as God is, and keep them Holy, and Humble, and Temperate, and Juſt, and Peaceable, thereby to come off well at the Great Day of Accounts. It would cauſe them to love, honour, and obey their Saviour *Chriſt*, and repent truly of all their ſins, and put them upon Prayers and Devotions, and keep them in the unity of the Church, and the Publick Aſſemblies, and make them encourage the Grace of God, and joyn therewith their beſt endeavours, all which are only the forecited particulars.

Anſ. Yes, where a belief of theſe things is, theſe fruits may reaſonably be expected

from it. For they naturally follow on ſuch apprehenſions, and accordingly are aſcribed to them, and intended to reſult from them in the Holy *Scriptures*.

Queſt. And as it appears in theſe, ſo I ſuppoſe it might be made appear, how we are led on by ſome Points of Belief, to every other Point of Practice?

Anſ. It might ſo, but I judge theſe to be abundantly enough.

Queſt. But although all among us profeſs to believe theſe Principles, yet are few thus affected with them, or influenced thereby into theſe practices.

Anſ. Too true, alas! But therein they act moſt unreaſonably, and are falſe to their own perſuaſions. Whereas, if a Man has a real belief of theſe things, and will both attend or dwell upon it, and be true to it, following on whither it leads him; in its own natural tendency, and according to all reaſon, it would affect and influence him, as has been declared. From this Faith, ſuch Fruits are reaſonably to be expected; though where Men act out of reaſon, and either forget themſelves, or, to gratifie ſome unlawful luſts, are wilfully falſe to their own opinions, no ſuch things will follow it.

Queſt. If Faith be ſuch a fertile Grace, and ſo apt to uſher in all others; though it be but one in the Root and Cauſe, yet in the Fruit and Effect it will be all Virtues.

Anſ.

Anſ. Very right, and ſo it is. What in *Nature*, *Pleaſure* and *Pain* are among the *Paſſions*; that in *Religion*, *Faith* is among the *Graces*, viz. the Source, Root, and Groundwork of all the reſt, which are only its different expreſſions, according to its various Aſpects, as it looks ſeveral ways, and is converſant about ſeveral Objects. For as Pleaſure, ſimply offer'd and apprehended, begets Love; if offer'd as abſent, eſpecially as remote, it turns Deſire; if as attainable, chiefly when that attainment ſeems near, it becomes Hope; if as attainable ſurely, Confidence: and as Pain doth the like, with the Paſſions oppoſite: So Faith, as I have obſerv'd, when it is of God's Precepts, turns Obedience; when of his Threatnings, Fear and holy Awe; when of his Promiſes, Hope and Truſt; when the things promiſed are to be ſought of him, it becomes Prayers and Devotions; when they are delaied, Patience and Perſeverance; when they are beſtow'd and receiv'd, Thankfulneſs; when 'tis of his Providence, it turns Contentedneſs; when of the horrible nature and effects of ſin, Repentance; when of the ſpotleſs rewards of the other World, purification of our Hearts and Lives; when of the laſt Judgment, univerſal Innocence, that may ſtand the trial of it; when of God's Purity and Perfection, Imitation of him, or being Righteous as he is; when of *Chriſt* the Lord, and his Laws, keeping the Commandments; when

of the Holy Spirit, and his aſſiſtances, godly Care and good Endeavours; when of the Communion of Saints, keeping Unity in the Church, and attending Publick Ordinances. So that according to ſeveral objects, and occaſions, this one Principle of Faith transforms it ſelf into all ſhapes, and becomes all Duties, which are all therefore aſcribed to it in the Holy Scriptures. As when it is ſaid *to quench the fiery darts of the wicked*, Eph. 6. 16. *to overcome the world*, 1 Jo. 5. 4. *to purifie the heart*, Act. 15. 9. to be the Grand Parent of all Righteous doings, which are therefore called an *obedience*, or *righteouſneſs of faith*, Rom. 4. 11, 13, & c. 16. 26. And when the good deeds of the beſt Men, ſuch as *Noah*, *Abraham*, *Moſes*, *Daniel*, &c. are attributed to it, *Heb.* 11.

Queſt. And is it from this effecting all Virtues, that it ſtands adorn'd with all Privileges, and that ſuch Promiſes are made to it when named alone, as are due only to it, and all others in conjunction?

Anſ. Yes, ſuch as that thereby we are *the children of God*, Gal. 3. 26. and *abide in the Son, and in the Father*, 1 Joh. 2. 24. and have *Chriſt dwelling in us*, Eph. 3. 17. That it *juſtifies us*, Rom. 5. 1. *makes us righteous*, Rom. 10. 10. gains *the remiſſion of ſins*, Rom. 3. 25. *ſaves* us, *Joh.* 5. 24. All which, though they manifeſtly require Repentance and Obedience, are yet in the places cited aſcribed to Faith, becauſe, as opportunity ſerves, and objects call for them, it is productive of them both.

Queſt.

Queſt. You have fully ſhewed what are thoſe ſuitable affections, which Faith is to work in us. And thereby I perceive plainly, that Faith with its ſuitable effects, is the ſame in other words, with Faith and Repentance, which at firſt you ſaid was the way for Men to ſave their Souls. But will not Faith ſave us, and be imputed unto us for Righteouſneſs, till we are thus affected with it, and act according to our perſuaſions?

Anſ. No, without this it did not ſave good Men in old Times, nor will now ſave us.

Queſt. The *Old Teſtament* Worthies, both before the Flood and after, were accounted *Righteous*, and ſaved by their Faith, as the *Scripture* † teſtifies. But was not Faith accepted of them, unleſs it thus influenced and affected them? † Heb. 11.

Anſ. No, 'tis plain it was not, from the particular accounts of thoſe Worthies.

Queſt. Pray make that out in inſtances, which will be a clear proof in this caſe.

Anſ. Firſt, Noah became Heir of the Righteouſneſs by Faith, by believing, in a ſinful and ſecure Generation, that God would bring the general Flood upon the World. But that was, when he fear'd, and acted as one ſo perſuaded, or *being moved with fear, prepared an Ark at God's command, to the ſaving his* own *houſe* from it. *By which* Fear, and preparation of the Ark upon his Faith, as S. *Paul* notes, *he condemned the world, and became heir of the Righteouſneſs which is by faith*, Heb. 11. 7.

Again, Moſes was accepted, for believing the poor *Iſraelites*, who were then all oppreſſed ſlaves in *Egypt*, to be for all that the *People of God.* But that was, as in purſuance of that belief, *he refuſed to be called the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter*, the greateſt Honour and Worldly good he had in *Egypt*, and *choſe rather* to ſide, and *bear affliction with them.* Yea further, as at God's command, and in confidence of his Preſence with them, *he forſook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the King*, who, as he muſt needs think, would be moſt highly incenſed at his carrying away ſo great a Body of a Laborious, and Drudging People from him, *Heb.* 11.24,25,26,27. His Faith is alſo cried up, for believing God would *paſs over* all the Houſes of the *Iſraelites*, when he went to *ſlay all the firſt-born* among the *Egyptians.* But the acceptance of this, as S. *Paul* notes, was as through that Faith he obey'd God, *to keep the Paſſover, and the ſprinkling of blood upon the lintel, and the two ſide poſts* of their Doors, which God had made the condition, and * token of their being preſerv'd, *verſe* 28. 'Tis celebrated, laſtly, for believing God's † Promiſe to *divide the waters of the red ſea*, and make them ſtand as a Wall on either ſide, till he was paſſed over. But all the Praiſe of this belief, was as in virtue of it, he ventur'd himſelf and People, betwixt thoſe Mountains of Water, and *paſſed through as if it had been dry Land*, as God directed, *verſe* 29.

* Exod 12. 22, 23.

† Exod. 14. 16.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, *The Harlot Rahab* was *preſerv'd* as S. *Paul*, and *juſtified* as S. *James* ſays, for believing that the * *God of Iſrael* was *ſtronger than all Gods*, and had *given Jericho to the Iſraelites*. But that, as we are expreſly told, was only as in purſuance of that belief, ſhe turn'd to that ſide, which ſhe ſaw God eſpouſed, and *concealed the ſpies*, *and ſent them away in peace*, James 2. 25. & Heb. 11. 31. * Joſh. 2. 9, 10, 11.

Laſtly, *Abraham*, whilſt *he* † *dwelt in Meſopotamia*, accepted for believing, that * *God would give him another land, wherein he ſhould grow to be a great nation.* But that was, when in vertue of that belief, *at God's command he left his own country*, and *obey'd* to *wander*, *not knowing whither he went*, in ſearch of that Seat and Inheritance, which God had choſen for him, *Heb.* 11. 8. He was eſpecially juſtified for believing God, when he promiſed * to *make his Son Iſaac a numerous*, *and bleſſed people.* But this was, as in Power of that Faith he ſtuck at nothing, but at God's command readily *offered him up when he was tried*, *accounting that God was able to raiſe him up*, *even from the dead*, to verifie that Promiſe to him, *Heb.* 11. 17, 18, 19. His *offering up Iſaac* in virtue of that Faith, *fulfilled that Scripture*, *which ſaith*, *Abraham believed God*, *and it was imputed to him for Righteouſneſs*, as S. *James* ſaith, *Jam.* 2. 21, 23. † Act. 7. 2. * Gen. 12. 1, 2. * Gen. 15. 5, 6. & c. 21. 12.

Queſt. I ſee plainly from theſe inſtances, that Faith when it had theſe ſuitable effects, was the thing God imputed for Righteouſneſs

Righteouſneſs to the *Old Teſtament* Worthies. They were all Righteous through Faith, not whilſt Faith was only an idle belief, and ſpeculative Notion, but when they feared, and acted, as any rational and conſiderate Man would do under ſuch perſuaſions. What have you to add more, to ſhew the ſame of us Chriſtians?

Anſ. The Faith that will avail and ſave us, we are plainly told, is a Faith that

1. Affects our Hearts, and renews all within us. It muſt beget *Hope* and *Truſt in God*, the *Devils faith* being rejected, becauſe they only *tremble* at God's Word, and dare not truſt it will do them any good, *Jam.* 2. 19. It muſt produce *Charity*, which, ſays S. *Paul*, * *fulfils the Law* of the Second Table, and leads into every other Duty. For *Charity is the end of the Law, out of faith unfeigned*, 1 Tim. 1. 5. and the Faith which *avails to the hope of righteouſneſs, is a Faith which worketh by love*, Gal. 5. 5, 6. In ſumm, laſtly, it muſt *cleanſe the Heart*, whence, as our Saviour obſerves, * *all evil doth procede*, purging out the *Old Man* of Pride, Anger, Envy, Luſt, *&c.* and planting therein the New Man of Humble, Pious, Pure, and Virtuous Tempers in its ſtead: *purifying the heart*, as S. *Peter* ſays, *Act.* 15. 9. and 1 *Pet.* 1. 21, 22.

* Rom. 13. 10.

* Matth. 15. 18, 19.

2. Reforms our Practice. The *Numbers* that *believed* acceptably, *turned unto the Lord*, ſaith S. *Luke*, Act. 11. 21. The *Faith which availeth, worketh by love*, ſays S. *Paul*, Gal 5. 6

it

it *overcomes the world*, ſaith S. *John*, 1 Jo. 5. 4. it *makes us free from ſin*, ſays our *Saviour*, Jo. 8. 32. It muſt carry us on to good deeds, as it did *Abraham* to *leave his country*, Heb. 11. 8. and to *ſacrifice his ſon*, Jam. 2. 21, 22. and as it did *Rahab to receive the ſpies*, verſe 25. A working Faith is the only Faith that lives; for *faith without works is dead*, Jam. 2. 20. *as the body without the ſpirit is dead, ſo is faith without works dead*, verſe 26. It is the only Faith that profits; for *if a man ſay he hath faith, and have not works, what doth it profit?* verſe 14. It is the only Faith that ſaves, and juſtifies. *If a man ſhows faith without works, can faith ſave him? Abraham was juſtified by works*, verſe 21. and *Rahab was juſtified by works*, verſe 25. *ye ſee then, how that by works a man is juſtified* together with Faith, *and not by faith only*, verſe 24.

Queſt. If there is no Juſtification by any Faith, but what reforms the heart and practice, I perceive in the queſtion of *Juſtification*, we muſt no longer oppoſe Faith and Obedience, but take care to ſecure both, it being, as S. *Paul* ſaith, a *working faith*, or, as S. *James*, *faith and works* together, that juſtifies us.

Anſ. Very right.

Queſt. But doth not S *Paul*, when he ſpeaks of *our juſtification*, ſay it is *by faith without the deeds of the law?* Rom. 3. 28.

Anſ. Thoſe deeds, are the deeds of the *Jewiſh Law*, chiefly ſuch diſtinguiſhing ones, as *Circumciſion*, *Sacrifices*, *Jewiſh Holy-Days*, and

and obſerving the *Moſaick differences of clean and unclean Meats.* Theſe, ſome *Zelots* for *Moſes* preſſed upon the *Gentile-Converts* in many Churches, ſaying, *Except ye be circumciſed after the manner of Moſes, ye cannot be ſaved*, Act. 15. 1. And when ſome ſtarted up at *Rome*, to preſs the neceſſity of the ſame to Juſtification there, S. *Paul* oppoſes all ſuch deeds, and tells them they muſt not ſeek to be juſtified as *Jews*, but as *Chriſtians*. So what he rejects, are *Moſaick deeds*, or any others *under ſuch qualifications, as the* Jews *obtruded, and cried up for Righteouſneſs.*

Queſt. Pray what are thoſe?

Anſ. Firſt, They ſet up a *mere Humane Righteouſneſs, in outward Acts.* This is Righteouſneſs in *Civil Courts*, where the Judges are Men, that cannot ſee the Heart, but judge and pronounce according to *Overt-Actions.* And the Law of *Moſes* being the Law of their *Common-Wealth*, whoſe Breaches were triable in their *own Courts*; they eſteemed themſelves Righteous in the eye of their Law, as the World doth in caſe of other *Political* and *State Laws*, when they are not liable to be brought in Trouble, or Indicted upon them before any of their own Tribunals. This ſenſe of their *Legal Righteouſneſs*, was currant * among the *Doctors*. And *Joſephus*, a learned *Jew*, who lived and flouriſhed in the *Apoſtles* own Days, aſſerts it in no leſs an inſtance, than that of *Sacriledge*: * *wondering* at *Polybius*, an

* Vid. Grot. on Matth. 5. 20.

* Antiq. l. 12. c. 15.

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otherwise Praiſe-worthy Writer, as he ſays, for aſcribing *God's exemplary Vengeance* on *Antiochus Epiphanes*, to *his Sacrilege only deſign'd upon the Temple at* Elymaïs. Whereas, ſays he, *If he only intended, but did not execute and effect it, he did not deſerve to be puniſhed for it.* And accordingly, in S. *Paul's* accounts of the *Jewiſh Righteouſneſs*, he is careful ſtill to call it a * *Juſtification*, or *Righteouſneſs of works*, as conſiſting only in things brought on to act and practice. And meaſuring themſelves thus only by External acts, as cognizable before Humane Courts; the orderly Livers among them, made no more ſcruple of aſſerting their Righteouſneſs in the Eye of their Law, than any good Subjects do in pleading their innocence as to the Laws of their ſeveral Countries. As we find *the young man* did to our *Saviour*, when he poſed him upon *the Ten Commandments*, ſaying, *all theſe things have I kept from my youth up*, Matth. 19. 18, 19, 20. And as S. *Paul* did, in ſetting off his *Jewiſh Confidences*, ſaying, That *touching the Righteouſneſs, which is in the Law*, he was *blameleſs*, i. e. not to be blamed before any of their Tribunals, *Phil.* 3. 6.

* Rom. 4. 2, 6. & 9. 31, 32. Gal. 2. 16.

Queſt. But did not ſome things in the *Jewiſh* Law, extend to Mens *Hearts* and *Spirits*. Particularly among the *Ten Commandments*, is there not *One*, viz. the *Tenth*, which forbids all inward *coveting* of what is our Neighbours?

Anſ.

Anſ. Yes, but there being no notice taken of theſe, nor punithments inflicted for them in their Courts, the *Doctors*, as may appear from what I have ſaid, looked on them rather as Counſels of Perfection, than ſtrict Laws of Righteouſneſs. Or if as Laws, yet ſuch, the Breaches whereof were ſufficiently atoned by their Daily, or Annual Sacrifices: which *ſanctified*, as S. *Paul* ſaith, *to the purging of the fleſh*; i. e. to indemnifie them before Men as to their Carnal, Secular Intereſts; though not to clear them before God, or *make them perfect as pertaining to the conſcience*, Heb. 9. 9, 13.

Queſt. What other Qualifications did the *Jews* cry up in thoſe Works, which they depended on to make them Righteous?

Anſ. Secondly, Their *merits*. For they ſet up a proud, boaſtful Righteouſneſs, which ſhould challenge the reward by way of merit and equivalence: not being content to reap all the Benefit, unleſs they could alſo arrogate all the Glory and Honour of it to themſelves.

Queſt. Whereon could they pretend to erect this?

Anſ. On *two* Foundations. *Firſt*, The *Power of natural free-will*, affirming their good deeds to be wrought in virtue of their own ſtrength, without which, whatever Glory there might be in them, it could be none of theirs. They thought they had Ability enough, for all the Righteous works they

they were to do, upon the *ſtock of Nature*: and needed no inward and enlivening Grace, but a meer *external Revelation*, or *dead Letter*, as their *Law* is ſtiled in * *Scripture*. And all this Power, they aſcribe to *Natural free-will* ſince the *fall*. For *the good, which* Adam *did before it*, † ſay they, *was as a pure intelligence, out of neceſſity of Nature. But his eating of the forbidden tree, of the Knowledge of good and ill, brought him, and his Poſterity, down to free will*, or an indifferency to either. Which liberty, they make moſt abſolute ever ſince: and accordingly interpret that common ſaying among them, *All things are in the Hand of God, but the fear of God*, to note ſuch abſoluteneſs of our free-will to good, as has nothing to controul it.

* 2 Cor. 3. 6.

† See Mr. *Smith's* Diſcourſe on Legal Righteouſneſs, *c.* 2.

Secondly, On the *intrinſick worth* and *value of their own deeds*, making them to deſerve Heaven by way of equivalence. They were the great affecters, and aſpirers after merits, * ſaying, That *happineſs by way of reward, is far greater, and more magnificent, than by way of mercy*. And they were the great aſſerters of them, claiming the reward on ſuch deeds, as † *excluded grace*, and were aimed all for * *boaſting*, as S. *Paul* ſays of them. And ſeveral Rules of eſtimate and valuation they had, to ſecure this to themſelves: † *one* was, from *the number and tale of their good deeds, if they had but done one more good, than bad actions, to make their merits preponderate their demerits. Another* was, from *their weight and importance*, if they had

* See Mr. *Smith*, *ibid.*

† Ro. 11. 6.

* Eph. 2. 8, 9.

† Mr. *Smith*, *ib. c.* 3.

had either the Skill, or good Fortune, *to make choice of ſuch, as God ſet moſt by, which might be put in the Scale againſt ſeveral others.* Nay, *ſuch in their account was the deſert of every good work, if they continued to keep any one of their Sixteen hundred and thirteen Precepts*, out of *Love to it*, and not from any *worldly reſpect, though at the ſame time the reſt were neglected.* Or if, when they had nothing elſe to produce, they could but ſay *they were the natural Seed of Abraham*, (a ground of *Jewiſh* confidence tax'd by * S. *John* the *Baptiſt*) and *were literally circumciſed*, they thought there was enough in them to merit the future reward. And being thus liberal in undervaluing what came from God, and over-valuing what they did for him: whilſt they thus ſet their own rates, they were ſure not to want deſert enough for the greateſt recompences. Yea, ſo far, as to make out their common ſaying, that *all Iſraelites ſhall have a portion in the world to come.* And for all theſe things, ſufficient teſtimonies are produced by learned Men out of their own Writings.

* Mat. 3. 7, 8, 9.

Queſt. So that I perceive the *Jewiſh* deeds, ſet up for Righteouſneſs by their *Doctors*, were the deeds of their own Law, eſpecially thoſe diſtinguiſhing Laws, which were peculiar to themſelves. And thoſe not any ſecret and ſpiritual, but only external acts, ſuch as fell under the cognizance of their own Courts of Juſtice. Which were cried up for Righteouſneſs, as performed in vir-

tue

tue of their own ſtrength, and meriting the reward by their own worth and excellence.

Anſ. Very right. And the aſſerters of ſuch works, muſt needs be under a great ſurpriſe, to hear of Juſtification by Goſpel-duties. Extending not only to Overt-Acts, but their Hearts, and Spirits; which were to be performed by the help of God's inward Grace; and rewarded through *Chriſt*'s merits, and God's merciful acceptance. And their way of meriting acceptance, by meer external *Moſaick* works, performed in vertue of their own free-will and Humane ſtrength, being in all its points a way of their own ſetting up, but diſowned and rejected by God, S. *Paul* calls *their own Righteouſneſs*: and oppoſes to the other, of being eſteemed Righteous through *Chriſt*'s merits, and God's merciful acceptance, on Faith and Obedience to the Goſpel, wrought by the help of God's Grace; which he calls *God's Righteouſneſs*, and the *Righteouſneſs of faith*, Phil. 3. 9. & Rom. 10. 3, 5, 6.

Queſt. Do the *Apoſtles*, in their diſputes of Juſtification with the *Jews*, ſet themſelves to beat down theſe points?

Anſ. Yes, and more eſpecially S. *Paul*, both at *Rome*, and *Galatia*, and other places. For in this matter they declare, how * *by the works of the Law, ſhall no fleſh be juſtified*, ſo that *the Gentiles muſt not live like Jews*: but only by *faith and obedience of Chriſt*, or † *faith working by love*, ſo that *the natural Jews* muſt

* Rom. 3. 20. Gal. 2. 14, 15, 16.

† Gal. 5. 6.

live as *Chriſtians.* That this Obedience *avails*, when it is not only with the *outward*, but alſo with the *inward* Man, containing together with the external Practice, a * *renewal of the mind*, a † *circumciſion of the heart and ſpirit*, and a * *new creature.* That 'tis wrought in us, not through meer *humane ſtrength*, but the *internal grace of God*, ſo as to be truly the † *fruit of the Spirit*, and the * *renewal of the Holy Ghoſt.* And that the Goſpel offering ſuch inward Grace, is thereupon a † *miniſtry of the Spirit*, and a *miniſtration of Righteouſneſs*: but that the Law wanting it, is therefore only an external Revelation, a *miniſtration of the letter, of death, and condemnation*, which ſeeing it * *could not* give the *life* it required, but only an outward direction how to lead it, therefore *Righteouſneſs could not come by it.* That this is counted Righteouſneſs, only in virtue of *Redemption by Chriſt*, and of the *merit of his Sacrifice*, firſt purchaſing the † *pardon of our ſins*, and then the *acceptance of our ſervices*: * *Chriſt being the end of the law for Righteouſneſs*, and we † *being juſtified through the redemption that is in Jeſus*, *whoſe blood is a propitiation for our ſins*, and * *who is made to us of God redemption, and righteouſneſs.* That in him, God accepts and rewards it, not for its *own merits*, but out of his *meer bounty* and *free grace*, without, and infinitely beyond its deſerts. We † *being juſtified freely, by his grace.* And that this way, as God's free Grace is exalted, ſo all *ſenſleſs* * *boaſts* are

* Rom. 12. 1, 2.
† Rom. 2. 28, 29.
* Gal. 6. 15.
† Gal. 5. 22.
* Tit. 3. 5.
† 2 Cor. 3. 8.
2 Cor. 3. 9.
* Gal. 2. 21. & 3. 21.
† Rom. 3. 25.
* Rom. 10. 4.
† Rom. 3. 24.
Rom. 3. 25.
* 1 Cor. 1. 30.
† Rom. 3. 24.
Rom. 3. 27.
1 Pet. 2. 9.

are excluded. Lastly, instead of the *Jewish* barter and exchange, in weighing out good against bad actions, or merits against demerits; they tell us, that he who continues to * *offend in one point*, is as liable to be condemned, though not to so sore a punishment, as *he that is guilty of all.* And that he, who sincerely endeavours to keep all, after *he has done the most*, must *say he has done no more than his duty*, and *is* still *an unprofitable servant.* All which, with sundry others, every where observable by any careful peruser of the *Apostolical Writings*, are directly levelled against the foresaid *Jewish* Tenets. * Jam. 2. 10. * Luke 17. 10.

Quest. And such *Jewish Deeds*, you say, are *the deeds of the law*, which S. *Paul* opposes. *Rom.* 3. 28.

Ans. Yes.

Quest. Indeed the *Apostles* Disputation there of *Justification*, is evidently against the *Jews.*

Ans. Yes, and the way whereby they sought to be justified, was by *the Law of Moses.* That they cried up, as the great Rule, and Dispensation of Righteousness and Perfection: *they stumbled*, as he declares, *at that stumbling stone*, Rom. 9. 31, 32. And they looked to be justified by it, in *virtue* and *merit of their own works*, as I have shew'd, not through the *merit of Christ's Sacrifice*, and the *Grace of God pardoning their offences*: which made S. *Paul* declare to *all, who would be justified by the Law, that Christ was become*

of none effect to them, and *that they were fallen from grace*, Gal. 5. 2, 4.

Queſt. But is it clear he ſpeaks of ſuch *Jewiſh deeds?*

Anſ. Yes, becauſe, as I ſay, ſuch were ſet up by the *Jews*, againſt whom he argues. Nay, as he adds, they were ſuch, as would make it neceſſary for all Men to turn *Jews*. For that way, ſays he, *God would be the God of the Jews only, and not of the Gentiles*, verſe 29. Beſides, they are ſuch works, as are a ground of * *boaſting*, verſe 27. and make *the reward reckoned out of debt* or deſert, *without grace*, or being beholden for it, *Rom.* 4. 4. *excluding grace*, as being inconſiſtent with it, *Rom.* 11. 6. And ſo the *Jews* believed, and taught of theirs, accounting Heaven a juſt and deſerved Wages for their works, without any need of Redemption by *Chriſt*'s Sacrifice, as I have already ſhewed.

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Queſt. And S. *Paul*, though he denies ſuch *Jewiſh* works, aſſerts works after the *Chriſtian* Faith, wrought in us by God's Grace, and accepted through *Chriſt*'s Sacrifice, to juſtifie and make us Righteous?

Anſ. Yes, in the very ſame Verſe, wherein he rejects *the Law of works*; that is, *Jewiſh* works, he declares we are juſtified by *another Law*, viz. *the Law of Faith*, in performing what it impoſes, *Rom.* 3. 27. And the Faith, which *avails to Righteouſneſs in Chriſt Jeſus*, he ſays, is a *working Faith*, Gal. 5. 6. And the ſame S. *Paul* ſpeaking of the Faith, which juſtified the Ancient Worthies,

Worthies, particularly notes thoſe correſpondent Affections and Practices, which it produced in them to make them Righteous. As *Noah's holy fear*, and *obedience* in *building of the Ark*, though all the while he was laughed at for his pains, by a merry and ſecure World; and *Moſes's quitting the higheſt hopes and honours of Egypt*, to aſſociate with the perſecuted People of God; and *Abraham's leaving his Country*, and *ſacrificing his Son* at God's command; and all the other inſtances above-mentioned.

Queſt. By what you have ſaid, I plainly perceive, that a working Faith, or a Faith that ſuitably influences and affects us, is the Faith that always did, and always muſt recommend Men to Almighty God. Which, when the *Scripture* contents it ſelf barely to imply the effects, it ſimply calls Faith; when it would ſpeak out, and expreſs both, it calls Faith and Repentance.

Anſ. Very right.

Queſt. But ſince all Faith doth not atchieve theſe noble feats, and all Graces do not grow upon this ſingle ſtock in all Believers; Pray what are the great properties, that fit Faith for theſe effects, and diſtinguiſh the Faith of thoſe that ſhow theſe Fruits, from the Faith of thoſe that want them?

Anſ. They are reducible, I think, to theſe *Two*, the *ſincerity*, and the *ſtrength* of it.

Quest. What mean you by the *sincerity* of this Faith?

Ans. First, That it be *real and unfeigned.* Not a meer pretence of Faith, under which *Infidels* may disguise themselves among Christians, to be trusted or emploied. Nor a meer outside profession, which unthinking Men may chuse and put on, as they do their Cloathes, without looking for any further reason, than to be in the fashion, and which they can as easily and readily alter again, as they do their Habit, when the Mode shall turn. But a real, inward belief and persuasion. It is an *unfeigned Faith*, that S. *Paul* commends in *Timothy*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 5. and an *unfeigned Faith*, out of which flows *charity*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 5. and the Faith or *Wisdom*, which makes Men *pure and peaceable*, &c. says S. *James*, is *without Hypocrisie*, Jam. 3. 17. So that they are never like to be fruitful Believers, who follow *Jesus*, as some *Jews* did, only to run in with the Crowd, or for the sake *of the Loaves*, more than out of inward Convictions.

Secondly, That it be *Hearty* and *Affectionate*. Not a meer speculative Opinion, and careless Notion, as of things wherein we are not much interested: but a moving and influencing perswasion, wherewith all the powers of the Soul are affected. Our Opinions must form our Passions, and advance into *Love*, *Desire*, *Hope*, *Fear*, *Care*, *Endeavour*, and the like, according to the different nature and power of the things believed.

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Queſt. Beſides this ſincerity, is it neceſſary to a *ſaving* and *effective Faith*, that there be moreover a good degree of *ſtrength* and *firmneſs* in it?

Anſ. Yes, for ſuch a ſtrong Faith it was, that made *Abraham*, and other *Holy Men*, obey God, whereupon they were accepted. *Abraham*, ſays the Scripture, *was not weak* or fickly, *but ſtrong in Faith, whereby he gave glory unto God*, Rom. 4. 19, 20. the Faith that fits us for Chriſtian Privileges, and the Bleſſings of *Baptiſm*, as *Philip told the Eunuch*, is *a belief with all the heart*, Act. 8. 37. If good Fruits do not ſpring from Faith, it is becauſe there is but little of it; why *take ye thought, O ye of little faith?* Matth. 6. 30. & 8. 26. or becauſe there is very ſmall,

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or no life in it, *Faith* being as *dead, as the body is without the ſpirit, when it* ſtands *alone*, and no vital motions or effects ſtream from it, *Jam.* 2. 17, 20, 26.

Queſt. I perceive this ſtrength of Faith, is neceſſary to enable it to do its work and conquer all that doth oppoſe it. But in what doth this ſtrength conſiſt?

Anſ. In *three* things eſpecially. 1. That it be *aſſured and confident.* 2. That it be *honeſt*, or ſeated in one that makes conſcience of being juſt to his word. 3. That it be *reſolute.*

Queſt. Muſt the Faith, that produces theſe ſuitable effects, be *aſſured* and *confident?*

Anſ. Yes, for a wavering Opinion will not accompliſh its work. It muſt make us forego many grateful things, and undergo many ungrateful ones, and attempt many that are very difficult and laborious. And Men will not run theſe ventures, and bear theſe loſſes, on uncertain hopes, but only on firm and certain expectations. And therefore right and acceptable Believers are exhorted to *draw near to God with full aſſurance of faith*, and *to hold faſt their profeſſion without wavering*, Heb. 10. 22, 23. and to *ſhew diligence, to the full aſſurance of hope to the end*, Heb. 6. 11. And half Faith, makes ſuch Believers to be like *King Agrippa*, only half and *almoſt Chriſtians*, Act. 26. 28.

Queſt. Muſt it alſo be *honeſt*, that is, have a good Conſcience accompanying it, and

and be ſeated in one, who is careful to be juſt to his word?

Anſ. Yes, as it implies the owning of Doctrines and Propoſitions, ſo it leads to ingage in Promiſes and Undertakings, the good performance whereof includes not only Underſtanding and Knowledge, but alſo Honeſty and good Conſcience. So that a fruitful Faith muſt not be a bare skilfulneſs in Opinion, but alſo a truſtineſs and integrity in diſcharging a Profeſſion. It effects Obedience only in juſt and upright tempers, that make Conſcience to perform their promiſes, to fulfil their pretences, and anſwer all juſt expectations. Among all thoſe ſeveral ſorts of *hearers*, by whom it was *received*, the *word* believed *brought forth fruit* only *in an honeſt and good heart*, as our *Lord* himſelf notes, *Luke* 8. 15. And *to draw* us *near to God, with a full aſſurance of faith*, we muſt joyn *a true heart, and a clean conſcience*, Heb. 10. 22. and the *charity*, which the Law requires, flows then only from an *unfeigned faith*, when 'tis accompanied with *a pure heart, and a good conſcience*, 1 Tim. 1. 5. And therefore in *Simon Magus* it bore no Fruit, becauſe *his heart was not right in the ſight of God*, Act. 8. 13, 21. So that we muſt not wonder, if we ſee a true Faith prove barren, and producing no obedience, in a diſhoneſt, and falſe Man. Since it is not Faith alone, but Honeſty that muſt make a Man careful to remember, and perform his undertaking, and falſe

falſe unjuſt Perſons, how right ſoever they may be in their belief and apprehenſions, will be as like to break their word with God, as they are with their Neighbours.

Queſt. Muſt it alſo, *laſtly*, be *reſolute*, and fully fixed after all things are well conſidered: That ſo, when any hardſhips ariſe in the way of Faith, we may not be ſoon ſtaggered in mind, and put to deliberate anew, whether or no to go on in it?

Anſ. Yes, when they want this reſolvedneſs, Men are not like to hold on in a way of difficulties, and ſuch as do every where occur in Faiths race. Every true Believer muſt have caſt up all the coſt, and pains of his way beforehand, as our Saviour tells us in the Parables of the *wiſe builder*, and of the *king going to war*, Luke 14.28,31. They muſt ſtand prepared to run all hazards, and ſuſtain all loſſes, ſetting Faith above all things elſe, and reſolving to ſtick to it, whatever prove its trials and diſcouragements. And ſuch *Believers* as theſe, the Scripture calls *grounded, and ſettled in the faith*, Col. 1. 23. and *rooted, built up, and eſtabliſhed in it*, Col. 2.7. And the *believers*, or *receivers of the word*, who *fell off in tribulation*, are ſaid to *have had no root in themſelves*, Matth. 13.21. A deliberate reſolution is a ſure Ground-work, and what is built on that may be like to ſtand a Storm, and after all the Aſſaults that are made upon it, remain unſhaken.

Queſt.

Queſt. So that the Faith, whereon all the fore-mentioned Fruits are like to grow, muſt not be a meer pretence of Faith, but ſincere and undiſſembled; it muſt not be an empty profeſſion, and formal out-ſide, but inward in the apprehenſion of the mind; it muſt not be a wavering Opinion, but confident, and well aſſured; it muſt not be a ſpeculative, cool, and unmoving Notion, but hearty, concerning, and affectionate; it muſt not be in a careleſs, forgetful, and failing, but in a conſcientiouſly careful, juſt, and performing Man; it muſt not act on an irreſolute heart, which will be eaſily daunted, or ſoon ſtaggered, but one, that upon good reaſon, and after due deliberation, is fully fixt, and reſolved to follow it.

Anſ. Yes, the Faith that influences the Heart and Life, and ſtands in all times and trials, muſt be thus qualified. And the Faith, which is either diſſembled, formal, wavering, unaffecting, careleſs, or irreſolute, ſome one or other of which the Faith of all Sinners is, is like to have no ſuch Bleſſed Fruits proceeding from it: As *Simon Magus*'s had not, whoſe *heart was not right*; nor *Agrippa*'s, whoſe Faith was but *almoſt*; nor the Temporary Believers, whoſe *faith fell away becauſe it wanted root*. So that theſe different attendants, and various qualifications of Faith, make the difference in its Fruits and Effects, and diſtinguiſh the Faith of Saints from the Faith of Sinners.

Queſt.

Queſt. It has been often ſaid of Faith by ſome, that it is an act of *Recumbency*, or *leaning* and *rolling our ſelves on Chriſt for Salvation*. Are ſuch Phraſes applicable to Faith in a *literal*, and *common* underſtanding of them?

Anſ. No, for Faith is an act of our Spirits, and though Bodies lean and reſt on Bodies, yet Spirits have none of theſe Bodily Geſtures, and Affections. When ſuch words are uſed in expreſſing *mental* acts, they are *Metaphors*, which are applied to them on account of ſome *Similitude* and *Reſemblance*?

Queſt. What acts can the Faith of a Man's mind exert about a Perſon, which may anſwer theſe forms of *recumbing*, or *leaning* upon him?

Anſ. Either Believing ſome Doctrine which he teaches, or relying on ſome Promiſe which he makes. Theſe may be ſet off by the acts of recumbing, leaning, and rolling. For as theſe are ways of Bodies reſting, and depending; ſo are thoſe of a Man's mind's doing the ſame upon any Perſon. They acquieſce and reſt on his Judgment, in what he ſays; and on his Fidelity, in what he promiſes: which gives them the ſame eaſe and ſettlement, as the acts of rolling, leaning, and recumbing do to Bodies.

Queſt. Faith is alſo called by ſome, the *hand of the Soul*, that *reaches at*, and *apprehends* and *applies Chriſt's Merits*. What is there in

in this Spiritual Grace, that can answer these expressions?

Ans. *Reaching at* them, is *assenting* to some Propositions about them. And *laying hold of* and *applying* them, is *consenting* and *complying* with some Overtures, or *fulfilling* some terms and conditions, whereby they become our own. Putting out these mental acts has the same effect and use to our Souls, as stretching out the hand to apprehend and apply things has to our Bodies, that is, *to bring the thing desired down to our selves.*

Quest. So that to roll and lean upon *Jesus Christ*, is in plain *English* only to believe what he says, and to rely upon what he promises. And to apprehend, or lay hold on *Christ*, and apply his Merits, in clearer and more intelligible Language, is only to fulfil the Gospel-terms, or to have Faith with its fore-cited effects, that is, to believe and repent, whereby his benefits become ours.

Quest. Yes, that I take to be the true meaning and explication of these obscure Phrases. I confess I am a great lover of plain, and intelligible Speech. And above all things else, I love to hear Men speak plain in the great Truths of Religion, and Points of Salvation, wherein there is the most need of all to inform, and edifie Men's understandings. And therefore I heartily wish these dark, and intricate words were less used, or wholly laid aside in these important

portant matters, they being words of Mens invention, which the Holy *Scripture* no where uſes about them, and ſuch words too, as I am ſure do more amuſe, than inſtruct thoſe that hear them. But if any think fit ſtill to uſe them, or meet with Faith ſet off by them in Books or Diſcourſes, this, and no more, in a true ſenſe, and in plain intelligible *Engliſh*, I think is the meaning of them.

Queſt. If Faith in *Chriſt* be a Faith in his Word, then is it no part of *Faith* for any Man to *believe his ſins are pardoned*, nor of *Infidelity* to doubt of it, becauſe particular Men have no word of his for that?

Anſ. Very right. He tells us in the *general* he will pardon Penitents, but in his Word he has not deſcended to tell *particular* Men they are truly Penitent, having reſerved that to be declared at the *laſt judgment*. Beſides, every Man muſt have true *Faith* before he can be pardoned, *Faith* and *Repentance* being the conditions of Pardon. But no Man muſt believe his ſins are pardoned before they are pardoned, ſince that were plainly to believe a falſhood.

Queſt. But ſince all doubting of the Pardon of our Sins, and the Favour of God, implies *diſtruſt*, how will it ſtand with *Faith in God?*

Anſ. The belief that our Sins are pardoned, implies our truſt and confidence of *two* things. *One* is, of God's Power and Fidelity, in fulfilling his Promiſes. The

other

other is, of ſufficiency of our own care, in performing his Terms. Now Faith implies truſt, and confidence, only in the *former* of theſe.

Queſt. Is Faith only a confidence, and truſt in God, not in our ſelves, and implies a good opinion only of his Power and Faithfulneſs, but not of our own fitneſs?

Anſ. Yes, and ſo of *Abraham* it is ſaid, when *he believed*, That *he gave glory to God*, Rom. 4. 20. His Faith conſiſted, as the *Apoſtle* notes, in what regarded him: he *being counted righteous for believing*, that *what God had promiſed, he was fully able to perform*, verſe 21. When once Men have the greateſt aſſurance of thoſe Divine Properties, they are ſaid to have the greateſt Faith, though at the ſame time they think meanly, and are moſt diſtruſtful of themſelves. So the good *Centurion* was, having ſuch confidence in Chriſt's Power, that he thought a *word of his mouth* would recover his Son, without giving him the trouble to *come in perſon*: and at the ſame time thinking ſo meanly of himſelf, that he judged *his houſe unworthy to receive him*. And of this *Chriſt* declares, *I have not found ſo great faith, no not in Iſrael*, Matth. 8. 8, 10.

Queſt. I perceive 'tis no part of any Man's Faith, to believe his ſins are pardoned, nor of Infidelity to doubt of it. But though ſuch doubts are not the ſin of *Infidelity* againſt God, yet are they not always *ſinful*, and *blame-worthy* upon ſome other account?

Anſ.

Anſ. No, but oft-times expreſſions of virtue, and ſerve to recommend us the more to God; as being acts of humility and ſelf-abaſement, of modeſty and poverty of Spirit, which ſet no Man further off, but bring him nearer, and intereſt him the more in his favour. The fearful *humble Publican*, who durſt not preſume on any favour, but *with dejected eyes ſtood afar off, went home juſtified of God, rather than the proud Phariſee*, who *juſtified himſelf*. Upon which our Saviour adds, that *every one, who exalts himſelf, ſhall be abaſed; and every one, that humbleth himſelf, ſhall be exalted*, Luke 18. 10. to 15. *God is nigh*, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt, to the broken of heart, and contrite of ſpirit*, Pſal. 34. 18. *He dwells with the contrite, and humble ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and revive the heart of the contrite ones*, Iſaiah 57. 15. *He looks to him that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembles at his word*, Iſaiah 66. 2. to *lift up thoſe, that humble themſelves in his ſight*, James 4. 10. and to *bleſs the poor in ſpirit*, Matth. 5. 3. Indeed, dejection, ſadneſs, and tormenting fears, are a backner of good endeavours; and accuſe God, as if he were an hard, uncomfortable Maſter, very difficult to pleaſe; and Religion, as if it were a ſowre, melancholy ſervice: ſo that faithful hearts muſt not affect, or harbour fear to theſe degrees. But when they maintain a comfortable hope, 'tis generally more commendable to lean to the ſide of humble fear, than of arrogant ſelf-flattery, to be

be too lowly and modeſt, rather than too preſumptuous and boaſting.

Queſt. And is it not more ſafe too?

Anſ. Yes, fear begets care, whereas ſecurity ſlackens watchfulneſs, and abates endeavour. And therefore the *Apoſtle* adviſes thoſe, who would expect *to ſtand, not to think highly, but fear*, Rom. 11. 20. and to *work out their ſalvation with fear*, Phil. 2. 12, 13. And he was a wiſe Man that ſaid, *Happy is he that feareth always, but he that hardneth his heart* againſt fear, *ſhall fall into miſchief*, Prov. 28. 14. The wiſeſt, and the beſt way generally is, to be *fully aſſured of what concerns God*, but *fearful and jealous of what depends upon our ſelves.*

Queſt. But have not ſome good Men, great confidence of God's favour? And ſince that is the priviledge of the moſt conſummate Saints, and gives the greateſt * *peace* and † *joy in God*, and *comfort in believing*, which the Scripture ſpeaks of: muſt it not be a moſt juſtifiable, as it is really a moſt bleſſed and deſirable thing?

* Gal. 5. 22. Pſal. 37. 37. † Rom. 15. 13.

Anſ. Yes, if their confidence is not beyond their grounds, and under this comfortable aſſurance of their preſent claim to Happineſs, they preſerve an humble ſenſe of their own defects and unworthineſs, and a fear of their falling from it by after-failures. And this comfortable aſſurance is vouchſafed to ſome extraordinary good Souls, as their ſpecial priviledge; as fears and doubts are continued to others, for their

exerciſe. And different Perſons are either indulged more happy injoyment from God, or ſo exerciſed as to make them more acceptable and dear to him, both theſe ways.

Queſt. You have ſaid enough to explain the *nature*, and to ſet off the *excellency* and *uſefulneſs* of *Faith*. But leſt after we have taken the pains to walk by it, it ſhould fail all our expectations in the end; pray ſhow me ſomething of the *certainty* of it.

Anſ. That depends on the *Authority of Jeſus Chriſt*, who is the *Author* of our Faith. And all muſt needs be true that he Says, and ſure that he Promiſes; becauſe he is the *true Meſſiah*, or the *Chriſt of God*, who was to come as his Great *Prophet*, to make known his mind unto the World.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

That Jeſus is the Chriſt, from Ancient Prophecies.

The Contents.

Among thoſe Prophecies, which prove Jeſus to be the Chriſt, First, *Some preſcribe the time of his coming. This they mark out by the nearneſs of ſuch notable Occurrences, and Revolutions, as would fall under all Mens obſervation. And by fixing the very Year he ſhould appear in. Accordingly there was a general expectation of him at that time. His coming not put off beyond the time appointed, for the ſins of the People. An account, why the* Jews, *who read theſe clear Notes of the time in their own Prophets, are not convinced by them.* Secondly, *Others aſſign man peculiar, and viſible Notes, whereby he may be demonſtratively pointed out from all other Men. As,* 1. *His being born of a Virgin. This in ſome ſenſe ſpoken of a Virgin of that time, but principally of Meſſiah, and then only fully accompliſhed, when Jeſus came. This cleared from exceptions.* 2. *His having the Spirit of Miracles, reſting on him.* 3. *His Death, with the particular manner, and circumſtances of*

it. And his returning to Life again. 4. *His putting an end to the* Jewiſh *Sacrifices and* Moſaick *Covenant, and bringing in a New one, and a better, to ſupply its defects.* 5. *His erecting an Univerſal Empire, and appearing as a mighty King. This not a Secular, but Spiritual Kingdom.* 6. *His converting the Heathen World, from their Idol-worſhip. Jeſus ſilenced the Oracles, and caſt the impure Spirits out of their Temples. This an Argument for him, not only as accompliſhing a Prediction, but alſo as 'tis plainly a Divine thing. The Prophecies of an Univerſal Probity, and Peace under Meſſiah, cleared up, by an account both of their meaning, and accompliſhment. The fore-cited Prophecies underſtood of Meſſiah by the Ancient* Jews, *though denied by ſome later in hatred to our Jeſus.*

Queſtion. HOW doth it appear, that *Jeſus*, who was born of *Mary*, and ſuffered under *Pontius Pilate*, is the *Chriſt?*

Anſ. Firſt, From *ancient Prophecies. Secondly*, From undoubted *Divine Teſtimonies* other ways.

Queſt. Doth this appear from *ancient Prophecies?*

Anſ. Yes, and by theſe S. *Paul* endeavour'd to convince the *Jews* at *Rome*, *perſuading them concerning Jeſus, both out of the Law of Moſes, and out of the Prophets*, Act. 28. 23.

Queſt.

Queſt. How do theſe *Prophecies* demonſtrate him?

Anſ. *Two* ways. 1. By *preſcribing the exact time of his coming.* 2. By *aſſigning many peculiar, and moſt viſible Notes, whereby he may be demonſtratively pointed out from all other Men.*

Queſt. How do they *prefix the exact time for Meſſiah's coming?*

Anſ. By ſundry notable, and publick turns and occurrences, which would be remarked by all, and in judging whereof they could not be miſtaken.

Queſt. I pray you name them.

Anſ. 1. They ſay he ſhall come before the People of the *Jews* ceaſe to be a *Nation*, and a *Body Politick:* which now they are ceaſed to be, having no Country, or Common-wealth, which they can call their own, but for above 1600 years, ever ſince the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, living ſcatter'd, and diſperſed in every Country and Kingdom. And this notable alteration, which all the World muſt obſerve, becauſe thereby it loſt a Nation that bore a great name, and, by uſing moſt appropriate and ſeparate rites, made a peculiar Figure among them, is expreſly ſet out by the *Patriarch Jacob*, as a ſign to follow the coming of *Meſſiah. The Scepter ſhall not depart from Judah, nor a Law-giver from between his feet*, that is, the Nation of the *Jews* denominated from *Judah*, ſhall not ceaſe to have Government among them as a Civil State,

and the Benefit of their own Laws, *till Shilo come*, Gen. 49. 10.

Quest. What other notable sign do they give of this time?

Ans. Secondly, They say his coming shall be, whilst the *second Temple* is yet standing; which has been ruinated and demolished, ever since the City was destroyed by *Titus Vespasian*. *The Lord whom you seek, the messenger of the covenant, shall suddenly come to his temple*, saith God by *Malachi*, Mal. 3. 1. And of the *second Temple*, says he again by *Haggai I will shake all nations, and the desire of all Nations shall come, and fill this house with glory*, that is, with the Glory of his Presence, *Hag.* 2. 7. This presence of *Messiah* in resorting to it, was that, which was to make *the glory of this later house, greater than the glory of the former house*, verse 9. It was much inferiour to it, in respect of the Magnificence of Building: *Is it not in your eyes, who have seen the glory of the former house*, says God, *in comparison of it, as nothing?* verse 3. *And when the Priests, and Levites, and Fathers, that were ancient Men, and had seen the first house*, saw the *Foundation of it laid*, whilst others, who had not seen the former, *shouted for joy, they wept*, remembring the disproportion, *Ezra* 3. 12. And under it *Five* noble priviledges, *viz.* the *Ark of the Covenant*, whence God gave * Responses by audible Voices; the † *Urim and Thummim*, that Oracle for the miraculous Instruction of the *High-Priest*, when he consulted God on any

* Exod. 25. 21, 22.
† Num. 27. 21.

any State-concern; the * *fire from heaven* upon the *altar*, to consume the Sacrifice; the † *Schechinah*, or Divine Presence in the *Holy of Holies*, by a *visible Glory* and appearance upon the * *mercy-seat*; and the *Holy Ghost* in the *Spirit of Prophecy*, which, though it did many under the former, inspired none under this House; as the *Jewish* Writers observe, were all withdrawn. But notwithstanding it had the disadvantage in all these eminent respects, yet the presence of *Messiah* in it, was to give such a lustre to it, as in the Judgment of God himself would make it more Glorious.

* Lev. 9. 23, 24.
† 1 King. 8. 11. & Ps. 80. 1.
* Lev. 16. 2.

Quest. Do they mention any other Sign, that visibly marks out this time?

Ans. Yes, *Thirdly*, That it shall be shortly before the *destruction of the Temple*, and of the *City Jerusalem*, and the *utter desolation of the Jewish Nation*. For so the Prophet *Daniel* declares, that at the end of a set number *of weeks*, *Messiah shall be cut off*, *and* then *the people of the prince that shall come*, that is, the *Romans* who should invade them, *shall destroy the city*, *and the sanctuary*, *and the end thereof shall be with a flood*, viz. of *Romans* overpowering them, *and unto the end of the war desolations are determined*, that is, by that time this War ends, the desolation of the miserable *Jews* shall be consummated, *Dan.* 9. 26. Yea, to this he adds another most conspicuous sign, *viz.* that after *Messiah* was once come, the *Sacrifices of the Law* should all cease among them. *Seventy weeks*,

says the Angel, *are determined upon thy people, to anoint the most holy, and to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins*, that is, in the † usual Phrase of Scripture, and of the *Jews*, of *sin-offerings* or *sacrifices for sins*, which were to pass off when once *Messiah*, by the Sacrifice of himself, had fulfilled all that was typified by them, *verse* 24. And this has been most notoriously verified upon them. For by their Law, they were to have but *one Altar*, and were to * *bring all their sacrifices* from all places of the Land, to the *temple* in *Jerusalem*; and so were never to worship God with Sacrifice, when they were out of their own Nation. And accordingly, they have never sacrificed at all since they were driven out of their own Country, and both the Temple, and City were laid waste by *Titus Vespasian*, which happened within *forty* Years after the offering up of our Saviour *Christ* in his Crucifixion.

† Lev. 4. 3, 25, 29. & 5. 6. & Psal. 40. 6. in all which for sin-offering the *Septuagint* use ἁμαρτία. & 2 Cor. 5. 21.

* Deut. 12. 11, 13, 14.

Quest. All these signs are so publick and conspicuous, as must needs force themselves upon all Mens observation. And being all near the time, they sufficiently direct Men when about to look for this Great Person. But are there no Predictions more punctual in point of Time still, and that prefix the exact Year of his coming?

Ans. Yes, the Prophet *Daniel* foretels the very *Year*, both of his *Manifestation*, and of his *Death* and *Passion*: that the former should happen 483. and the latter 486 Years

Years after the iſſuing out of the Decree to rebuild, not the *Temple*, but the *city and the walls of Jeruſalem. Know therefore, and underſtand*, ſaith the *Angel*, *that from the going forth of the commandment to reſtore and build Jeruſalem, unto Meſſiah the Prince*, that is, to his manifeſtation, which begun at his *Baptiſm*, when he firſt drew Diſciples after him, *ſhall be ſeven weeks, and threeſcore and two weeks*, in all ſixty nine Weeks or Septenaries of *Years*, oppoſite to *weeks of days* mentioned *Dan.* 10. 2. which makes Four hundred eighty three Years, at the expiration whereof he ſhould come among them, *Dan.* 9. 25. This punctually marks out the Year 484. for the Year of his *manifeſtation*. And then as for his *Paſſion*, that he ſays ſhall fall out in the *week following*, nay, in the *middle of the week*, that is about three Years and a half after, or in the *fourth* Year from the manifeſtation, which will be the Four hundred eighty ſeventh Year from the granting out the Decree to rebuild *Jeruſalem. And after* the ſeven weeks, and the *threeſcore and two weeks*, that is the ſixty nine weeks, are ended, and ſo the ſeventieth Week or Septenary of Years is begun, *ſhall Meſſiah be cut off*, verſe 26. Yea, he ſhall be cut off in the middle of that Week. For *he ſhall confirm the covenant with many for one week*, that is in the ſeventieth Week, when he begun his Preaching, whereby many were converted; *and in the midſt of the week, he ſhall cauſe the ſacrifice and oblation to*

ceaſe,

cease, that is, put an end to all the *Jewish* Sacrifices, by the Sacrifice of himself, *verse* 27.

Quest. These Predictions are as express, and determinate in point of time, as can be spoken; but did the *Manifestation*, and *Crucifixion* of *Jesus*, fall out punctually according to this time?

Ans. Yes, as some * learned examiners of time do note, to a Year in both of them. For *the command to rebuild Jerusalem*, not only the *temple*, but *the street and the wall*, as the Prophet specifies it, *verse* 25. was *in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes*, as *Nehemiah* relates, *Neh.* 2. 1, 5, 6, 7, 8. There was a Decree, indeed, to rebuild the *Temple*, given before by * *Cyrus*, and another by † *Darius Hystaspis*, and so again by * *Artaxerxes Longimanus* in the seventh Year of his Reign, as appears by the Book of *Ezra*. But that for rebuilding *the city and wall*, which the Prophet is careful to specifie here, was not, as *Nehemiah* expresly says, till the *twentieth year of Artaxerxes*. Which, after the likeliest, and best grounded * computation, as I think, that begins his Reign in the second Year of the 77 *Olympiad*, fell out in the Year of the World according to † *Helvicus* 3498. Now begin-

* *Lydiat Emend. temp.* &c. An account of whose method, and reasons, may be seen in Dr. *More*'s Expos. of *Daniel*'s Visions, on Vis. 4. p. 120, &c.

* Ezra 1. 1, 2, 3.
† Ezra 6. 1, &c.
* Ezra 7. 1, 8, 12, 13, &c.

* *Lydiat Emend. temp.* p. 62, &c. & *Canon. Chron.* p. 54, &c.
† In Mr. *Lydiat*'s Calculation of the Worlds Age, a point differently fixed by most Chronologers, whilst they agree in the other Calculations, the twentieth year from the second Ol. 77. is made *A. M.* 3553.

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ning with this Year, and reckoning 69 Weeks, or 483 Years, the time predicted to expire before *Meſſiah*'s manifeſtation, the Year enſuing for him to appear in, makes the fourth Year of the 202 *Olympiad*, which is the Year of the World 3981. and the nineteenth Year of *Tiberius*. And this falls to be *the thirtieth Year of Chriſt*'s Age according to what I judge the * faireſt Account of his *Birth* (*viz.* that which fixes it in the third Year of the 195th. *Olympiad*, which fell upon the † 41ſt. Year of *Auguſtus*, and the Year of the World 3952.) and is that very Year of his Life, wherein, after the manner of the *Levites*, who at * *thirty years* old begun their Service, S. *Luke* ſays our Lord was † *Baptized*, and begun his Preaching, *Luke* 3. 21, 23. And reckoning to the 487th. Year, the time prefixed for his Paſſion, it makes the third Year of the 203d. *Olympiad*, and the 22d. of *Tiberius*, the very Year, according to the ſeemingly * exacteſt calculation of times, of our Saviour's Crucifixion. So that the *Apoſtles* had the greateſt reaſon to declare of *Chriſt's coming*, that it was *when the fulneſs of time was come*, Gal. 4. 4. thereby denoting, not only the moſt proper Seaſon, but the exact

* See *Lydiat Emend. Temp.* p. 134 *& ſeq.*

† According to the *Æra Hiſpan. in Tom. Concil.* though according to the common computation 'tis 45.

* Num. 4. 3.

† For Chriſt's Baptiſm in the 19. *Tib.* ſee *Lydiat Emend. Temp.* p. 168. *& ſeq.*

* *Lydiat, ib. p.* 176. *& ſeq.* And of all theſe particulars more largely in his *Recenſio & Explicat. Argum. Lib. Emend. Temp.*

act Time and Year, which was predicted of him.

Quest. This is a wonderful exactness in prefixing the time of *Messiah*'s coming, which being so punctually fulfilled in *Jesus Christ*, must needs conclude undeniably for him, unless some other pretender appeared in that Year to contest it with him. But since they were so particularly informed about the time, how came it, that as it drew on, the *Jews* were not daily looking for him?

Ans. They were all full of expectation, about the time our Saviour came. For at his Birth, *Simeon was waiting for the consolation of Israel*, Luke 2. 25. *Anna* also at the same time, when she saw him, *spoke of him to all those, that looked for redemption in Jerusalem*, verse 38. So full of expectation were the People in those days, that they were ready to give ear to every pretender, running after *Theudas*, and *Judas*, as *Gamaliel* reports, *Acts* 5. 36, 37; and after several others, as is related by * *Josephus*. Nay, so near was their expectation, and so apt were they to fix that Character on some; that if a Man were extraordinary, and of great Name, though he did not pretend to be the *Messiah*, yet of themselves they were ready to surmise it of him. And thus they did of † *John* the *Baptist*: for when he appeared to be an extraordinary Person, *they sent Priests and Levites to him, to know whether he was the Christ: and he confessed,*

* *Antiq. l.* 20. *c.* 6, 7.

† Luke 3. 15, 15.

confeſſed, and denied not; but confeſſed, I am not the Chriſt, John 1. 19, 20. Nay, this expectation they did not keep as a ſecret among themſelves, but boaſted of it in all places where they lived, and filled the *Greeks*, and *Romans* with it. *An opinion had then prevailed over all the Eaſt, grown up to be both old and conſtant, that God had decreed at that time to raiſe up one out of Judea, to the empire of the world*; ſays *Suetonius* in the * *Life of Veſpaſian.* So that as the Holy Prophets had given them juſt reaſon, both *Jews*, and *Gentiles* were in full expectation of *Meſſiah*, and then it was that our Saviour *Chriſt* came. He was manifeſted ere the Scepter was departed, for in his days, and for ſome time after, the *Jewiſh* Nation were a Body Politick, and lived under a form of Government: and while the ſecond Temple ſtood, for he daily converſed, and taught in it: and ere the City and Temple were deſtroyed, and thereby their Sacrifices all at an end, which was not till the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, almoſt forty Years after he was Crucified. In ſumm, he was manifeſted exactly at the end of the ſixty nine Weeks, in the 19th. of *Tiberius* and ſuffered in the midſt of the 70th. Week, which fell out in the 22d. of *Tiberius*, as the Prophet *Daniel* had punctually fore told of him. And the days of *Meſſiah* falling ſo exactly upon him, and upon no other Perſon, 'tis undeniably clear that he is the Man.

† *Sutt. in Veſp. c. 4.*

Queſt.

Queſt. But though God expreſly promiſed to ſend *Meſſiah* at that prefix'd time, yet might he not put it off for the ſins of the People, which rendred them utterly unworthy of ſo great a Bleſſing?

Anſ. No, for thoſe ſins were fore-told at the ſame time, and yet his coming promiſed notwithſtanding them. * *Iſaiah* repreſents the Men of *Meſſiah*'s Age, as an Infidel and hard-hearted Generation, that *would not believe his report*, but *hide their faces from him* in the extremity of his affliction; * *Jeremy*, as having *made void God's former covenant*, and therefore needing *a ſecond* to be introduced by him; † *Malachi*, as having loſt even *natural affection between Parents and Children*, which *Elias* muſt go before to reſtore among them; * *Daniel*, as perſevering under his appearance to ſin on, and provoke God to that height, as would cauſe him ſhortly after to cut them off, and *deſtroy both the City, and the Sanctuary*, by a moſt juſt and terrible judgment. Nay, ſo far were the ſins of the People, from being an hindrance to his coming in the ſight of God, that, as the Prophets plainly declare, they were to be the cauſe and reaſon of it. The coming, or *anointing of the moſt holy*, ſays *Daniel*, is *to make an end of ſins* or ſin-offerings, and *make reconciliation for iniquity*, Dan. 9. 24. *to offer up his ſoul an offering for ſin, to bear the iniquity of us all, to be wounded for our tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for our iniquities, that through his ſtripes*

we

* Iſa. 53. 1, 3.

* Jer. 31. 31, 32, 33.

† Mal. 4. 5, 6.

* Dan. 9. 26, 27.

we may be healed, ſays *Iſaiah* 53. 5, 6, 8, 10. His coming was to be for the expiation of ſin, *to open a fountain to the houſe of David, and the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, for ſin, and for uncleanneſs*, Zech. 13. 1. And coming thus to expiate, and cure ſin; there is no more reaſon to ſtay him beyond the time, becauſe ſin grows ſtrong, than, in the increaſe of a Diſeaſe, to delay the uſe of Remedies, or ſtop the coming of the Phyſician.

Queſt. But doth not God ſay, *when he ſpeaks of building up*, or exalting *any nation, if they do evil in his ſight, he will repent of the good, wherewith he ſaid he would benefit them*, Jer 18. 9, 10.

Anſ. Yes, and ſo he doth in all thoſe Promiſes, which he makes upon Mens ſuppoſed virtues, and on condition of their good carriage. But the Promiſe of *Meſſiah* was abſolute, and intended, as appears, on no ſuch proſpect. For God declared he ſhould come among a People full of ſin, and inſtead of being deferred by their wickedneſs, ſhould be ſent becauſe of it, to atone and heal it. Beſides, if only the Fathers ſins had ſtopped his coming, their Poſterities Repentance would have removed that impediment, and have brought him down; which they ſee for above this 1600 Years, it has not done.

Queſt. I ſee the ancient Prophecies declare *Jeſus* to be *the Chriſt*, by prefixing the exact time of his coming: wherein they are

are ſo particular, and punctual, as might ſuffice in a Hiſtory of things already paſſed. But I pray before you leave this point, of the exactneſs of time, how can the *Jews*, who believe all theſe Prophecies, ſhut their Eyes againſt them?

Anſ. The elder *Jews*, who lived before *Chriſt*, did ſee them, as appears from their general expectation of him about that time, and from what the *learned* * *Grotius* relates of *Rabbi Nehumias*, who living fifty Years before *Jeſus Chriſt* came, declared, that within fifty Years *Meſſiah* muſt come, becauſe in that time *Daniel*'s Weeks prefixt for him were to determine. But as for the later *Jews*, who lived ſince our Saviour, they turn by all of them by one rule, whereby at their pleaſure they may turn by any thing, that is, by not medling at all with them, nor ſuffering any to interpret, or collect the time of his coming from them. This is the meaning of that ſevere *Anathema*, which * ſome have noted from the *Thalmud*, *Let his puft up Bones burſt, that ſhall meddle in computing the periods of times.* And accordingly the rule of the great *Maimonides*, their *ſecond Moſes*, concerning the *days of Meſſiah*, is, *to believe ſurely that he will come, and if he prove ſlow, ſtill to expect him, and never to fix him any time, or ſo to explain any Texts of Scripture, as to infer the time of his appearance from them.*

* *De Verit.* l. 5. c. 14.

* *Vid. Epiſcop. Inſtit.* l. 3. c. 5.

Queſt.

Queſt. That, indeed, is a clear reaſon; for the plaineſt words can never convince thoſe, that will not read, or underſtand them. But beſides that the ancient Prophecies prove *Jeſus* to be *Chriſt*, by *preſcribing the exact time of his coming*, you ſaid alſo, that they demonſtrate it further, by *aſſigning many peculiar, and moſt viſible notes, whereby he may be demonſtratively pointed out from all other Men.* What are thoſe peculiar, and notable marks, whereby they ſo effectually deſcribe him?

Anſ. They are certain eminent, and moſt obſervable things, *belonging to him*, or to *be performed by him, which*, as they were moſt *viſible* in him, ſo were *peculiarly* his, and never found in any other Man.

Queſt. What things are thoſe, which were ſo notable in him, and peculiarly belonging to him?

Anſ. Not only that he ſhould be born of the *lineage of David*, Iſaiah 11. 1, 10. and in *the city Bethlehem*, Mic. 5. 2. which, eſpecially in conjunction with the exact time before-deſcribed, are very diſcovering circumſtances, to the time when, adding the very Family, and Place where he ſhould be born, that all might know the very Town, and Kindred, amongſt whom in that Year they were to ſeek for him. But more particularly, that he ſhould be ſet off by theſe ſigns following.

Queſt. What are they?

Ans. First, That he should *be born of a Virgin*, which was a thing never known before, or since, and so was sure to point him out demonstratively from all other Men. *Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son*, saith God by the Prophet *Isaiah, and shall call his name Immanuel*, Isaiah 7. 14.

Quest. But the word, which is there rendred *Virgin*, say the *Jews*, may signifie only a *young Woman*, denoting her *Age*, not *Condition:* and then this having in it nothing peculiar, can be no proof to him?

Ans. It doth not appear that it signifies any thing else in Scripture, but a *Virgin*, the * place alledg'd for a laxer sense, well admitting that interpretation. But if it did, it must needs signifie a *Virgin*, that is, one *that has not known man*, in this place. For not only *the Septuagint*, that were all *Jews*, and lived long before our Saviour, translate it *Virgin:* but this conception is here given for a *sign*, or a miraculous thing; which would be none at all, were it spoken only of a *young Woman*; especially among the *Jews*, * *whose custom* it was most early to contract their Daughters, and Marry them, as soon as their Age would suffer them. When *Achaz* refused *to tempt the Lord in asking a sign, the Lord himself*, says *Isaiah, shall give you a sign. Behold! a virgin shall conceive*, &c. verse 12, 14.

* Prov. 30. 18, 19.

* *Vid Seld. ux. Hib.* l. 2. c. 3.

Quest.

Queſt. This ſhews it was ſpoken of ſome Virgin. But yet may it not be underſtood, as the *Jews* ſay, of ſome one, that only was a Virgin at the time of the Prophet's ſpeaking, who before ſhe could loſe her Virginity, conceive a Son, and the Child come to any underſtanding, God would work the deliverance which they deſired of him, as the *Prophet* declares, *verſe* 16.

Anſ. There is cauſe to think it was ſpoken of ſome ſuch Perſon, who was preſent before the Prophet, and pointed out by him, at the time of this Prediction. For in the *Original*, it is not Behold *a Virgin*, but *that Virgin ſhall conceive*, as if he had particularly marked out the Perſon to them. And *before the child* to be born of her, *ſhall know how to refuſe the evil, and chuſe the good, the land that thou abhorreſt*, ſaith he, *ſhall be forſaken of both her kings*, that is, *of* * *Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah king of Iſrael*, who at that time were their invaders. And this accordingly came to paſs. For in the *twentieth Year* from the beginning of *Pekah*'s *Reign*, whereof *ſixteen* were elapſed before *Ahaz* came to ſucceed him, and which therefore muſt fall within two, or three whole Years at moſt from the time of this Prediction, in which ſpace, the Child but then conceiv'd could not be grown up to Years of underſtanding, *Tiglath Pileſer, king of Aſſyria, ſlew Rezin*, and *Hoſhea ſlew Pekah*, as we read 2 *Kings* 15. 30, 32, 33. & 16. 9.

* Verſe 1

But although, as I ſay, this Prophecy had ſome reſpect to a Virgin of that time, yet did it look beyond her to a Virgin, that remaining ſuch, ſhould conceive *Meſſiah*, and was never fulfilled till he came.

Queſt. How doth it appear, that it was not fulfilled in the Virgin pointed out at that time?

Anſ. Becauſe the moſt noted things in that Prophecy, were left unaccompliſhed then, particularly theſe following:

Firſt, The conceiving of this Virgin, is made a *miraculous* conception, and is given to the Houſe of *Judah* for a *ſign*, as I noted, *verſe* 11, 12, 14. And this muſt be meant of her conceiving, remaining ſtill a Virgin. For, for one that is now a Virgin, to Marry, and after that conceive, is no miraculous, nor ſtrange thing.

Secondly, The Child *Immanuel*, to be born of this Virgin, was to be *Maſter of the Land of Judah*, which the Prophet therefore calls *thy land, O Immanuel!* Iſaiah 8. 8. And this was not fulfilled in the Virgins Child of that time. That Child the *Jews* make to be *Achaz*'s *Son*, viz. *Hezekiah*, who was afterwards *King* of *Judah*. But he was born ſeveral Years before this Prophecy, which cannot therefore ſpeak of conceiving him. For the Prophet is expreſly ſaid to come with this Meſſage to *king Achaz*, verſe 1, 3. a clear evidence of its falling ſome time in *his Reign*. Now *he reigned ſixteen years in Jeruſalem*, 2 Kings 16. 2. and then

then left *Hezekiah* his Son to ſucceed him. And *Hezekiah*, ſays the *Scripture*, *was twenty five years old, when he began to reign*, 2 Kings 18. 2. So that he muſt needs have been eight or nine Years old, when his Father *Achaz* aſcended to the *Throne*. The Child here promiſed then, could not be *Hezekiah*, who was afterwards *King*; but very probably was the Prophets own Son, who lived and died a private Man: ſo that this part, of being *Maſter of the Land of Judah*, could not be fulfilled in him.

Queſt. Had the Prophet a Son born to him preſently after that time?

Anſ. Yes, and that, 'tis like, by a Virgin, whom, at the time of his Prediction, he either had eſpouſed, or deſigned to eſpouſe to himſelf. *I went in unto the Propheteſs*, ſaith he, proceeding on ſtill in the ſame Prediction, *and ſhe conceived, and bare a ſon*, Iſaiah 8. 3.

Queſt. But how doth this Son appear to be the ſame *Immanuel*, that was promiſed to be *born of a Virgin*? Chap. 7.

Anſ. Firſt, Becauſe he has the *ſame Name*. By which I do not mean, that he was noted by the ſame word, but by one that implies what the other expreſſed, and ſignifies the ſame with it, which is the ſame Name in Scripture account. For the *Virgins ſon*, chap. 7. was *to be called Immanuel*, that is, *God with us*, to note God's Favour and Preſence, *verſe* 14. And the Prophet is ordered to call his Son *Maher ſhalal-haſh baz*,

that is, one *born to speed on the spoil*, and *hasten the prey*, chap. 8. 3. And this, though a different word, has the same virtue and effect with the other. For when a People are in any distress by Invaders, as the *Jews* were at the † time of this Promise, the effect of God's Favour and Presence, is to give them Conquest, and Spoil over their Enemies. And this answering the virtue and effect of a Name, is called the having that Name in Scripture. Thus it is frequently in the Holy Prophets, as in (*a*) *Isaiah*, (*b*) *Jeremy*, (*c*) *Ezekiel*, (*d*) *Zechary*. And thus *Christ*'s being called *Immanuel*, that is, *God with us*, *was fulfilled*, saith S. *Matthew*, when *he was called Jesus*, that is a Saviour, because God's Kindness and Presence is most eminently shown and brought to effect, in the Salvation and Deliverance of his Servants, *Matth.* 1. 21, 22, 23.

† Chap. 7. 1.

(*a*) Isa. 1. 26. & 62. 4.
(*b*) Jer. 3. 1.
(*c*) Ezek. 48. 35.
(*d*) Zec. 8. 3.

Secondly, Because the Prophets Son was made a *sign for the same thing*, viz. the deliverance of the *Jews* from these two invading Princes, in less time, than would suffice him to attain to any understanding. *Before the* Virgins *child*, says the Prophet, *chap.* 7. *shall know to refuse the evil, and chuse the good*, that is, before he can attain to distinguish between good and bad, *the land that thou abhorrest*, viz. the Land of † *Syria* and *Israel*, now become hateful to the *Jews* for these their inrodes, *shall be forsaken* or deprived *of both her kings*, verse 16. And *before the Prophets child*, says the relation,

† Verse 1.

chap.

chap. 8. *ſhall have knowledge to cry my Father, and my Mother, the riches of Damaſcus* the *metropolis* of *Syria, and the ſpoil of Samaria* the * *capital* place of the King of *Iſrael, ſhall be taken away before the king of Aſſyria*, verſe 4. In both which places, there is an evident promiſe of the ſame thing, *viz.* the deſtruction of theſe two Kings, and that within the ſame ſpace of time, *viz.* before the Child then promiſed could attain to the Age of any underſtanding. So that the Virgins Child referred to in the Prophets time, was moſt probably the Prophets own Son. And he not being of Royal Race, but living and dying, as I ſaid, a private Perſon, 'tis plain this part of the *Prophecy*, viz. *the childs being maſter of the land of Judah*, could not be fulfilled in him.

* Chap. 7. 8, 9.

Queſt. Have you any more things to inſtance in, which ſhew this Prophecy was not fulfilled in the Virgins Child of that time?

Anſ. Yes, *Thirdly*, Becauſe the Virgins Child in that promiſe is adorned with the *glorious Titles*, and *plain Characters of Meſſiah*. For in further purſuit of God's Promiſe in this Child, and the deliverance by him, in the ninth *Chapter* the Prophet cries out triumphantly, *Unto us a child is born, unto us a ſon is given, and the government ſhall be upon his ſhoulder: and his Name ſhall be called Wonderful, Counſellor, The mighty God, The everlaſting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

Of the increase of his government, and peace, there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order, and to establish it, with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. verse 6, 7. Now this Person, whose Title and Character is *Wonderful, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace,* and *whose government on the throne of David was to be perpetually increasing*, is plainly no other but *Messiah.* And he being the Person promised by *Isaiah*, to *be born of a Virgin*, that Prophecy, however answered in some parts before, could never be fulfilled and accomplished, but in him.

Quest. But you said before, it had respect to the Virgins Son of that time, and was in part effected then. And if it must still be meant of *Christ*, and made good in him again some hundreds of Years after, this makes the same words to be designed for several meanings, yea, such as must be verified at far distant times, which seems a strange thing?

Ans. This is most usual in the *Scriptures*, and especially in Prophecies, which are often spoken of one Person next in view and near at hand, in whom they are fulfilled in part; but of another further off, who, though he lies hid till he is shown by the event, is yet the Person chiefly meant, whereof the other was only a *Figure* or *Type*, and in whom they are fully to be accomplished. Thus God's Promise to *David*,

2 Sam.

2 Sam. 7. 12, &c. Of *ſetting up his ſeed for ever after him, and* ſaying, *I will be his Father, and he ſhall be my Son*, though it were ſpoken immediately, and in part of *Solomon*, as is moſt apparent, yet was chiefly intended, and fully made good in † *Chriſt*. And the words of *David*, about God's *not leaving his ſoul in hell*, &c. *Pſal.* 16. 8, 9, 10. though ſeemingly ſpoken, and in part verified of his own Perſon, were yet meant, and fully accompliſhed in *Chriſt's Reſurrection*, whereto S. *Peter* applies them, *Act.* 2. 29, &c. And ſo when *God ſaid unto him, Thou art my ſon*, and *I will give thee the Heathen*, Pſal. 2. 7, 8. which had its full effect in *Chriſt*, according to S. *Paul's* interpretation, *Act* 13. 33. And the ſame S. *Matthew* aſſures us of the Virgins Son, which though it might have ſome regard to a Child of that time, yet was then only *fulfilled*, when *Chriſt* came, *Matth.* 1. 21, 22, 23.

† Heb. 1. 5.

Queſt. But if this Virgins bearing a Son, be meant of *Chriſt*, How could it be given to *Achaz*, and the Houſe of *Judah*, for a *ſign*, ſince he was then afar off, and not to come till long after that Generation?

Anſ. Becauſe it was meant of another too, who was to be conceived at that very time, and would prove a *ſign to them*. And as this inferiour accompliſhment, would be a ſign of this anſwerable Deliverance in that Age: ſo would the miraculous Birth of *Chriſt*, when it ſhould more eminently fulfil

fulfil this Prophecy, be a much more illustrious sign, of an incomparably greater, to their Successors. And this also answers the end of its being given here for a *sign*, which is not limited to any Person, or Time, but indefinite, to the *House of David*. *Hear*, says the Prophet, not *O! Ahaz*, but *O! house of David*, &c. *verse* 13, 14. Besides, in *Ahaz*'s time, the Faith of *Christ*'s being born of a Virgin whilst only promised, would give it the virtue of a sign, as well as the sight of it when performed. The end of it was to assure them, that the *Kings* of *Syria*, and *Israel*, should not prevail against them, *verse* 4, 7, 9, 10. And this, if they believed it, 'twas apt to do, as an argument from God's intending for them a greater kindness, to his readiness in performing a less: for sending *Messiah* to be *born of a Virgin*, and to be *God with us*, must argue a greater power and kindness, than would suffice to work this deliverance from these invading Princes. And after all, it is not unusual in the Scriptures, to beget Faith and confidence, by such signs, as are remote and far off, as God did to *Moses*, Exod. 3. 12. and to *Hezekiah* and the *Jews*, Isaiah 37. 30.

Quest. By this I perceive this Prophecy, of a *Virgin bearing a Son*, was intended of *Messiah*. But was it fulfilled in *Jesus* when he came?

Ans. Yes, most miraculously. For his Mother that bare him, was a pure Virgin,

as

as appeared both from her own account, and *Joſeph*'s her reputed Husband, both Perſons of known Integrity, and unqueſtionable Credit. And when after her eſpouſal, *Joſeph* doubted of her Chaſtity, becauſe *ſhe was found with Child before their coming together*, an *Angel* is diſpatched from Heaven to clear her Honour, and to aſſure him, that what was conceived in her, was not any Humane Production, *but of the Holy Ghoſt*, Matth. 1. 18, 19, 20. *The Holy Ghoſt*, as another *Angel* explained it to her ſelf, *coming upon her, and the power of the Higheſt overſhadowing her*, when ſhe objected the *impoſſibility* of her being a Mother, becauſe *ſhe was a pure maid*, Luke 1. 34, 35. All which was ſo unqueſtionable, and notoriouſly made out to the *Apoſtles*, and *Primitive Chriſtians*, their greateſt Enemies finding no pretence to cavil, and ſtart doubts upon it, that they univerſally and firmly believed it, and thought it a point of ſo great account, as to deſerve a place, and make one Article, in that ſhort Summary and Abridgment of Chriſtian Faith, called the *Apoſtles Creed*. For in that, one thing we profeſs to believe concerning *Jeſus* is, That being *conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, he was born of the Virgin Mary*.

Queſt. No wonder it found a place there, for it is a ſign, not more ſtrange than convincing, being of it ſelf alone ſufficient to prove *Jeſus* to be the *Chriſt*, ſince in this he has no Competitors, the like, I think, being

being never known, or pretended of any other Man. But beſides this, are there not other notable things ſet down by the Prophets, as *belonging to him*, which may ſerve ſtill further to diſcover him?

Anſ. Yes, *Secondly*, That an *extraordinary Spirit*, not only of *Wiſdom* and *Goodneſs*, but alſo of *Might* or *miraculous Power*, ſhould not only deſcend now and then by fits, but make a ſettled abode, and *reſt upon him*. Concerning *the branch, that ſhall grow out of the root of Jeſſe*, ſays the Prophet, *the Spirit of the Lord ſhall reſt upon him, the Spirit of wiſdom and underſtanding, the Spirit of counſel and might, the Spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord*, Iſaiah 11. 1, 2. And when once the former Prophecies had pointed out the exact Year, and place of his appearing, this ſign of it ſelf had been enough to diſcover him. For being thus extraordinary, not only for Wiſdom and Piety, but alſo for Might and miraculous Power, when any would ſurvey all the Men in *Bethlehem* in ſearch of *Meſſiah* at the prefixed time, he infinitely, above all others, muſt needs draw all Mens Eyes to him.

Queſt. Are there any more things ſtill belonging to him, which confirm the ſame?

Anſ. Yes, *Thirdly*, That he ſhould be *cut off as a Malefactor* by corrupt Judgment, noting the main circumſtances both previous and concomitant, and the particular, and

and then unuſual manner of his puniſhment. And that after his Death, he ſhould *return from the Grave*, and appear alive again. All this the *Pſalmiſt*, and the *Holy Prophets*, plainly foretel of him. *When we ſhall ſee him*, ſays *Iſaiah*, it will be *without form, or comelineſs: he is deſpiſed, and rejected of men*, Iſaiah 53. 2, 3. He is to be betrayed, and *ſold* to his Adverſaries *for thirty pieces of ſilver*, Zach. 11. 12. And when he is in their Hands, he ſhall be *judged* as a *priſoner*, Iſaiah 53. 8. his *back ſhall be ſcourged*, and *his face ſhall be ſpit on*, Iſaiah 50. 6. He ſhall be *tried* and *condemned*, and *cut off out of the land of the living*, Iſa. 53. 8. And as for the manner of his Death, that ſhall be by the *piercing of his hands and feet*, and keeping his Body between them ſo at ſtretch, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, that *they may tell all his bones*; a plain deſcription of a Death on the Croſs, which being a *Roman* puniſhment, and brought in among the *Jews* by their Conqueſt, muſt needs be unknown in *David's* Age, and ſo more obſervable, to be foretold by him ſo many hundred Years before, in deſcribing the ſufferings of *Meſſiah*. Beſides, under this Execution, they relate the *very words*, wherein *he* ſhould expreſs the bitterneſs of his Sorrows, and wherein the *ſtarers on* would vent their cruel Scoffs, and how they ſhould ſeek to ſharpen his Pains by a *draught of* * *vinegar*, and *pierce* or thruſt him through, as † *Zechary* declared in a *Text*, which the old *Rabbins*

* Pſ. 69. 21.

† Zech. 12. 10.

Rabbins applied to *Chriſt*, and when he was Dead, *ſhare his garment* by *caſting Lots* for it. *They pierced my hands and my feet, I may tell all my bones, they part my garments among them, and caſt lots upon my veſture: My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? Whilſt they ſtare upon me, and laugh me to ſcorn, ſaying, He truſted in God that he would deliver him, let him deliver him if he delight in him*, ſays the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſalm 22. 1, 7, 8, 16, 17, 18. Which *Pſalm*, and theſe paſſages of it, according to the Letter, never fully verified in the Story of *David*, after the *Jews* of *old*, the *New Teſtament* applies to *Chriſt*, *Matth.* 27. 35, 43, 46. & *John* 19. 24. Theſe *places* evidently foretel the method of his *Death* and *Humiliation*. And then after Death, the ſame Prophets as evidently foretel, that he ſhould not lie to * *ſee corruption*, but *return from the grave*, to a long, happy, and ſucceſsful Life. When *he ſhall make his Soul an offering for Sin, he ſhall prolong his days*; ſo that after his dying as a Sacrifice, he was to be a live Man. Nay, *the pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his hand. He ſhall ſee of the travel of his ſoul, and ſhall be ſatisfied*; ſo that he was alſo to be an active, undertaking, and ſucceſsful Man, *verſe* 10. yea, *I will divide him a portion with the great, and he ſhall divide the ſpoil with the ſtrong*; that is, be moſt Wealthy, Potent, and Victorious amongſt Men, *verſe* 12. All which long, active, and happy Life, was to be beſtowed on him, not only after

*Pſ. 15. 10.

his

his Death, but as a recompence and reward of it. *He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors*, that is, was condemned and executed in the herd of Malefactors, *verse* 12.

Quest. I see all this was plainly prophesied of *Messiah*, and was it fully made good in *Jesus Christ?*

Ans. Yes, For he appeared in a poor and despicable condition, as a * *carpenter's son.* He was *sold* by his own Servant † *for thirty pieces of silver*, which did the *Trayter* no good, but by an over-ruling Providence was *cast to the Potter*, or to * buy the *Potters Field* for a Burying place, as *Zechary* had foretold. He was put in Bonds as a *Prisoner*, and led about before † *the high-priest*, *Herod*, and the *Roman Governour*. They * *scourged* him, and † *spit* upon him, they *condemned* and *cut him off*, according to the word of *Isaiah*, not only as a Malefactor, but also in company with them, executing him † *between two thieves*, as the *Evangelists* relate of him. And as for the manner of his Death, though Crucifixion was no *Jewish*, but a *Roman* Punishment, and after the *High-Priest* had pronounced him *guilty of* * *Blasphemy*, by the constitution of the *Jews* and the † *Law of Moses*, he should have been *stoned*: yet by the special ordering of God, he suffered by the *piercing of his hands and feet*, and hanging so at stretch upon the Tree, that his *bones might be numbered*, according

* Matth. 13. 55. Mar. 6. 3.
† Matth. 26. 15.
* Mat. 27. 7.
† Luk. 22. & chap. 23.
* Jo. 19. 1.
† Matth. 26. 67.
* Mar. 15. 27, 28.
* Matth. 26. 65.
† Lev. 24. 16.

according to the words of *David*. In his extremities, though the custom of the Nation was to offer stupefactives, as *Wine and Myrrh*, to benum the Sense, and ease the pains of dying Persons; yet to verifie the saying of the *Psalmist*, they brought him * *Vinegar*, to whet and sharpen his. The *chief Priests, with the Scribes and Elders*, most inhumanly *staring* on him, said with cruel scorn, He † *trusted in God, let him deliver him now if he will have him*, the very words, which the Holy *Psalmist* had so long before set down for them: and he himself cried out, * *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* The very words again, which that Holy *Prophet* spoke for him in his extremity. As he hung upon the Cross, a Soldier † *pierced his side*, and thrust him through, to fulfil the words of *Zechary*. And when they saw he had expired, the *four Soldiers* that stood by, and were to share his Cloathes, would *not divide his seamless coat*, but * *cast lots for it*, according to the Prediction of the *Psalmist*. Amidst all which strange congruities, he had one other qualifying circumstance, which the Prophet *Isaiah* remarks, *viz.* to *make his grave*, as *with the wicked*, by dying for a pretended crime, so *with the rich in his death*, Isaiah 53. 9. which was verified, by his being *wrapt in fine linen*, and Entombed, as by his care, so in † *Joseph of Arimathea's own Sepulchre*, who was *a* * *rich man*, and an † *honourable counsellor*. And then as for his

* John 19. 28, 29. & Matth 27. 34, 48.
† Matth 27. 41, 43.
* Matth. 27. 46.
† John 19. 34.
* John 19. 23, 24.
‡ Matth. 27. 60.
* Matth. 27. 57.
† Mark 15. 43.

his *return to life again*, to be an *undertaking*, *ſucceſsful*, and moſt *potent*, *happy* Perſon: that has been moſt notoriouſly, and eminently made good, in our Bleſſed Saviour's Reſurrection, and in the unparalleled ſucceſs of his Religion in all places ſince that time. And this again, eſpecially his *Reſurrection*, is another note, which as it fits *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah*, ſo beyond diſpute excludes all other Men. For though *Theudas*, and *Judas*, as *Gamaliel* * obſerved, and other *falſe Chriſts*, in juſt reward of their Impoſtures, have been condemned and ſlain; yet was never any of them ſeen to return to life again, to carry on their pretences, and to proſper and thrive in them. * Act. 5. 36, 37.

Queſt. Have you any other notable, and appropriating marks to add from them, to theſe already given?

Anſ. Yes, *Fourthly*, That he ſhould *put an end to the* Jewiſh *Sacrifices*, and to the *Covenant brought in by* Moſes, by reaſon of its imperfection; and inſtead thereof, make a *new*, and *more Gracious and Perfect Covenant*, *between God and Men*. And this being a moſt publick change, and aboliſhing an Inſtitution moſt peculiarly diſtinguiſhed, and univerſally eyed and taken notice of among Men, it muſt needs be a convincing ſign, and ſuch, as all might eaſily ſee, and obſerve when it came. When *Meſſiah* comes, ſaith the Prophet *Daniel*, he ſhall *make an end of ſin-offerings*, and *cauſe the* Moſaical

saical *Sacrifices and Oblations to cease*, Dan. 9. 24 27. *Behold! the days come, saith the Lord*, by *Jeremiah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and Judah*, Jer. 31. 31. Which days are plainly the *days of Messiah*, noted *verse* 22. who was to be *the Messenger or Angel of the Covenant*, answerable to the *Angel of God's Presence* among the *Jews*, by *whose* * *ministry* he established the *Mosaick Covenant*, as *Malachy* foretold, *Mal.* 3. 1. And this Covenant was to offer more large Indulgence, and richer Overtures of Grace, which would make it a Message *of Joy*, as † *Zechary*; a *publication of Peace, and Salvation*, a *bringing glad tidings of good*, a *binding up of broken hearts, and proclaiming liberty to the Captives, and preaching the acceptable year of the Lord*, as * *Isaiah*: it was to *forgive iniquity*, as † *Jeremy*; *making reconciliation* for it, as * *Daniel*; *opening a fountain* to wash away *sin and uncleanness*, as † *Zechary* says.

* Exod. 23. 20, 21. Gal. 3. 19.

† Zech. 9. 9.

* Isa. 52. 7. & 61. 1. 2.

† Jer. 31. 34.

* Dan. 9. 24

† Zech. 13. 1.

Quest. And did Jesus fulfil all this?

Ans. Yes, he hath taken off the yoke of *Moses*, and *abolished all its Ordinances, nailing them unto his Cross*, Col. 2. 14. He hath fulfilled all former, and superseded all later Sacrifices by *once offering that one Sacrifice of himself*, Heb. 9. 25, 26. He hath brought in a *new Covenant*, the Laws whereof have more root in our own Reason, called their being * *writ in our hearts and minds*; which makes them the *easier to be remembred*, as *Moses* is brought in saying

* Jer. 31. 33. & Heb. 8. 10.

ing † *the Laws of Messiah* should be, according to an *old Tradition* of the *Rabbies*: and the Mercy whereof extends to the forgiveness of more sins, as the *Prophets* foretold, than could be hoped for by the Law of *Moses*. For *Murder*, or *Adultery*, under that Law, God admitted of *no Sacrifice* to *bear any persons iniquity*, as may be seen in * *Leviticus*, and as *David* declares in *Uriah*'s case, *Psal.* 51. 16. Nor for *Idolatry*, Deut. 17. 2, 3, &c. nor for *giving their seed to Moloch*, nor for *seeking after Wizards*, nor for *cursing Parents*, nor for *Incest*, or *Sodomy*, or *Bestiality*, all which were *surely to be put to death* according to God's Ordinance, *Lev.* 20. 2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16. Nor in general, for any *presumptuous offence*, the *iniquity* whereof, as the *Law* says, was not to be *laid upon any Sacrifice*, but to *rest upon themselves*, and they to *be utterly cut off*, Num. 15. 30, 31. and *die without mercy*, Heb. 10. 28. Nay, under it a *curse* was pronounced, not only to those, who were guilty of some certain offences, but, what was more hard to be avoided, *to all, who continued not in all points written in the Law, to do them*, Deut. 27. 26. & Gal. 3. 10. But for all these sins, unpardonable by the *Mosaick Covenant*, our Saviour, who, according to the Holy Prophets, was to bring in a fuller Pardon and Oblivion of sins, than before was offered, doth proclaim Pardon, on Mens true Repentance, by his *New Covenant*. By it, as S. *Paul* declares, *all that be-*

† Mr. *Smith* of a Legal Right, [illegible] out of *Bit* [illegible]

* Lev. 20. 10.

lieve, are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses, Act. 13. 38, 39.

Quest. Was he to do any more things besides this?

Ans. Yes, *Fifthly,* To *found a kingdom,* and *appear as a mighty Prince. The Government,* says *Isaiah, shall be upon his shoulder, and it shall increase without end upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order, and establish it, with justice and judgment, for ever,* Isaiah 9. 6, 7. And this Principality, they say, shall be, not over the *Jewish* Nation alone, to whom the *Church* of God had been confined aforetime: but over the *Gentiles* too, who should all come in, and submit to him. *The root of Jesse, which shall stand for an Ensign of the People, shall set up an Ensign for the Na-*
Vul. *tions, and unto it shall the* † *Gentiles seek,* Isa. 11. 10, 12. *My servant shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles, I will give him for a covenant of the People, for a light of the Gentiles, for salvation to the ends of the earth,* Isaiah 42. 1, 6. & 49. 6. *To him whom man despiseth, Kings shall see and arise, Princes also shall worship. I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their Queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee, with their face towards the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet,* Isa. 49. 7, 22, 23.

Quest.

Queſt. If *Meſſiah* were to come as ſuch a Royal Prince, and erect an Univerſal Monarchy over all Nations; by that he might eaſily be known, and no Man would be at a loſs to diſcern *who is he*, when once this is done.

Anſ. No more, than they are at a loſs to know who is the *King of Great Britain*, the *German Emperour*, or the *Grand Signior*. Beſides the dependancies, that make ſo many concerned with them, the Quality and Greatneſs of ſuch Characters, is enough to make any Man known, and draw all Eyes upon him.

Queſt. And did *Jeſus* found ſuch a Kingdom?

Anſ. Yes, ſuch Kingly Power he claimed before *Pontius Pilate*, John 18. 37. And ſuch he exerciſes in the World. His Dominion, praiſed be God, goes beyond the *Jews*, and is ſpread far and wide among the *Nations*, whoſe Princes ſubmit their Scepters to his, and glory in being his Servants, and account being ſtiled *Defenders of the Faith*, *moſt Chriſtian*, or *Catholick Kings*, the very Flower of all their Titles.

Queſt. But how did he appear like ſuch a mighty Prince, ſince he made no pompous Entrance, with ſplendid Retinues, and ſtrong Guards; nor erected any Courts, to judge of Properties; nor liſted potent Armies, to repel Invaders; nor came furniſhed, either with rich Mannors and Preferments, to reward good Services; or with

visible and present Punishments, such as Confiscations, Prisons, Gibbets, to avenge the Transgressions of his Followers?

Ans. This, indeed, was the thing, that of all others was a *stumbling Block* to the *Jews*, who expected a *Secular Saviour*, a Prince in worldly Power, Pomp, and Greatness. But as to *Messiah's outward appearance*, the *Prophets* foretold quite contrary things. So did *Isaiah* among others, calling *Christ*, *him whom man despiseth, whom the nation abhorreth, a servant of rulers.* Isaiah 49. 7. *He shall grow up*, saith he in another place, *as a tender plant out of a dry ground, he hath no form nor comeliness, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised, and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from him*, being ashamed to own him, *Isaiah* 53. 2, 3. By these accounts, in outward appearance, he was to come more like a Peasant, than a Prince. But his Kingdom so much cried up, was to be Spiritual, giving Laws, not only to Out-Acts, which are triable in Secular Courts, but to Mens Hearts and Consciences; protecting, and aiding them, by unseen Providences, and Spiritual Assistances; rewarding and punishing, not with Temporal, but Eternal Recompences; not medling with a Secular Domination, over Mens Persons, or Purses, in things relating to this Life, but leaving that Power in the same hands, where it was lodg'd before.

And

And ſuch a principality as this our Saviour claimed, telling *Pilate* he *was a King, but* that *his kingdom was not of this world*; for *if it had, his ſervants would have fought, to have delivered him from the Jews*, John 18. 36.

Queſt. Was *Meſſiah* to do any other notable thing, which would ſtill be a further manifeſtation of him?

Anſ. Yes, *Sixthly*, He was to *convert the Heathen world from their Idol-worſhip*, and make *Pagan-Idolatry* fall before him. *In that day*, ſaith *Iſaiah*, deſcribing *Chriſt*'s Kingdom both over *Jews* and * *Gentiles, the Lord alone ſhall be exalted, and the Idols ſhall he utterly aboliſh*, Iſaiah 2. 17 18. *In that day*, ſays God by *Zechary, I will cut off the names of the Idols out of the land, and they ſhall no more be remembred*, Zech. 13. 2. *All nations* then *ſhall ſerve him, all nations ſhall call him bleſſed*, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. 72. 11, 17.

* Verſe 2.4

Queſt. Did *Jeſus* perform this when he came?

Anſ. Yes, he drave the proud Spirits out of their Temples, and ſilenced them in all their Oracles and other Divinations, and convinced the World, that thoſe they had hitherto worſhipped for Gods, were Devils, and that thoſe are no Gods, which are made with hands. And of this, there were ſo many inſtances, as there were of Heathen Men, and Heathen Nations, that turned Chriſtians.

Queſt. Thoſe Converts, indeed, are ſo many plain proofs of the overthrow of

Idols, since the first step in Christianity is the renouncing of the Devil, and of all Idol gods. But how doth it appear that he put an end to their Oracles, and other Divinations, which were the strongest argument of their Divinity among their Worshippers?

Ans. As his Birth drew near, they all grew dumb: God stopping all their false mouths against that time, that his own Eternal Word might be heard alone. The famed *Apollo* was then so sparing of his Responses, that * *Cicero* thought his renowned Oracle at *Delphos* had ceased in his days. And though afterwards he did speak sometimes, as I shall note in several instances: yet by the Power and Spirit of our Lord, when his Religion had got footing in the World, his Mouth was wholly stopped, and *locked up with the Keys of never-Divining silence*, as he himself says in a *Farewel Answer* recorded by his Champion † *Porphyrius*. And so were also the Mouths of *Jupiter Ammon*, and of all other impure Spirits most famed for Oracles in other places. This their devout Worshippers with grief beheld, and admired: and *Plutarch*, a learned Heathen, who lived within an hundred Years after *Christ*, writ a * *Book* about it still extant, wherein he inquires the best he can into the causes of it.

* De Divinat. l. 2.

† Vid. Euseb. Præp. Evang. l. 5. c. 16.

* Περὶ τῶν ἐκλελοιπ. χρηστηρ.

Quest. I see their general silence is beyond question. But can you show that *Jesus* silenced them?

Ans.

Ans. Their own professed *Advocates* make him the cause of the Demons withdrawing themselves from Men, both in this and in other effects of their presence with them. For *since Jesus began to be worshipped*, says * *Porphyry, the Gods are no longer conversant with Men, nor has any Man received any publick benefit by them.* Nay, the vanquished Spirits themselves, who gave so many Testimonies to him, when he drove them from before his personal Presence here on Earth, in their Oracles, and other Divinations, confessed so. For when *Augustus*, in whose time our Saviour was born, inquired of *Apollo* who should succeed him in the *Empire*, his Reply was, as † *Suidas* reports, *That an* Hebrew *Boy, who rules the blessed Gods, had commanded him to pack away to Hell, and leave that place*, so that he was like to give them no more answers. Again, in the days of *Diocletian*, as * *Constantine* relates in *his Edict to the Provincials of the East*, he gave out another *Oracle*, Declaring *he could give no true Answers, because of the just Persons upon the Earth.* And when *Diocletian* asked, *Who were those just Persons:* the *Priest* answered, *They were the Christians.* Which *Constantine declares*, and *calls God to witness*, was *said in his hearing*, who, being a *very Youth*, attended the Emperour at that time. Afterwards, in the Reign of *Julian* †, when his *Temple at Daphne*, celebrated for Oracles,

* *Vid. Euseb. Præp. Evang. l. 5. c. 1. & Theodor. de curand. Græc. Affect. l. 10.*

† Under Αὐγοῦστος ὁ Καῖσαρ.

* *Euseb. de vit. Constant. l. 2. c. 50, 51.*

† *Sozom. Hist. Eccl. l. 5. c. 19. & Theod. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 10. & Chrys. Homil. 2 S. Bab.*

was

was confronted by a *Christian Church*, wherein were laid the Bones of the *Martyr Babylas*, he presently *grew speechless*. And when *Julian* pressed him for an Answer, by *magnificent Gifts and Sacrifices*, at last he told him, *He was hindred from giving Oracles by the dead Bodies in that place.* Which the Emperour well understanding, *singled out the Coffin of Babylas*, without disturbing the other dead, whereof many lay there interr'd, and ordered the Christians to remove it. Indeed, when the *Heathens* at any time *consulted their Gods by Sacrifice*, and were to read their Answer painted upon the *entrails*, if any of their *Christian Servants* happened to stand by, *the wicked Spirits fled away without giving the accustomed signs, and their deserted Prophets could make no Predictions.* Which being complained of to their wicked and superstitious Princes, was several times the chief cause, as * *Lactantius* notes, which enraged them to *persecute the Christians.* In particular, it inflamed *Diocletian* to begin his Persecution, the Bloodiest of all others. For his *madness* against them, as the † same *Author* reports, was because *their presence, and profession of Faith in Jesus, stopped the mouth of his Gods, and troubled all his Sacrifices.* So that whilst any of them was there, though he offered often, one time after another, this superstitious Man, an insatiable inquirer into Futurities, *could receive no answer.* Nay, to shew further the Power, which, as I say, not only *Christ* himself, but

* *Instit l.* 4. *c.* 27.

† *De Mort. Persec.* 10.

but every *common Chriſtian* had, to command and controul theſe unclean *Demons*, * *Tertullian* deſires the Emperours to make the Experiment, and bring any that is *vexed by a Demon*, or any *Prophet that is thought inſpired by him*, before the *Judgment ſeat*: and there ſet any *poor Chriſtian*, to *command that Demon to ſpeak who he is. And if*, ſaith he, *not daring to lye to him, he doth not as truly there before you all confeſs himſelf a Devil, as he had falſly otherwhere proclaimed himſelf a God, then let that malapert Chriſtian be put to death, for undertaking what he is not able to make good.* And the ſame is alledged by † *Minutius Felix* in his *Book* againſt the *Heathens*.

* *Apol. c.* 23.

† *De Idol. Van. p.* 30.

Queſt. This extirpation of *Pagan* Idolatry, being an effect ſo illuſtriouſly great, and that would be ſo vehemently oppoſed, and wherein ſo many People and Nations were concerned, it muſt needs be the obſervation, and aſtoniſhment of all the World, and all Men muſt evidently ſee when it is brought about?

Anſ. Yes, and ſo it happened. After our Saviour's Death, it was the great buſineſs, that took up Mens thoughts and diſcourſe, that exerciſed the Pens of the beſt Wits, and the Skill of Politicians, that unſheathed the Magiſtrates Sword againſt the Godlieſt of his Subjects, and expoſed the bleſſed *Martyrs* on Theatres, to wild Beaſts, and all ſorts of Torments and Deaths, in all the *Roman* Empire, and other places, for ſeveral

several Ages. This Triumph of *Messiah* over *Satan*, that grand Enemy and Usurper, made a greater, and more universal and lasting noise, and astonishment, than ever was made at the downfal of the vastest, and most potent Empire.

Quest. But besides this evidence, as it accomplished a Prediction; was not such wonderful prevalence of *Christ*'s Religion, over all the Legal Establishments and Idolatrous Religions of the World, a clear testimony of God to him, as it was a most miraculous, and plainly Divine thing?

Ans. Yes, indisputably it was. When Religions prevail, that have been in possession for several Ages; that shows the power of Custom, and Education. When such, as are inforced by Laws and Arms, and which the Secular Power doth espouse, and propagate; that shows the might of Authority, and forcible Violence. When such, as are agreeable to Mens Lusts, and gratifie their natural inclinations, that manifests how easily Men are perswaded to what they like, and the mighty influence of natural Propensions. When such, as come fortified with a general Vogue, and numerous Assertors; that shows the overawing influence of Crouds, and Multitudes. But when a Religion is made up of self-denials, and runs in many things cross to Mens common sentiments, and in more to their inclinations, and foretels sufferings

to

to its followers, and inrages evil Men, and evil Spirits. When it decries the aſſumed Divine Honours of Emperours, and ſtints and controuls all their unjuſt, and impious commands. When it leſſens the credit of all *Gentile* Prieſts, who at that time had the guidance of Mens Conſciences, reproving their moſt extol'd Opinions, as falſe, or frivolous; and their moſt beloved Practices, as wicked, or ſuperſtitious. When it enters againſt all authority of Laws, and craft of Politicians, and ſubtilty of Philoſophers, and power of Magiſtrates, and violence of Tumults, and Prejudices and Luſts of all, and ſeeks to pull up all the firmeſt eſtabliſhments of former Ages, altering not only the publick Conſtitution, but, what uſually men are more fond of, the approved Religion of Kingdoms, under which God had made their Anceſtors moſt flouriſhing and victorious, as was plain in the caſe of the *Romans*. When it attempts all this by a few, and thoſe too unlearned, and unfriended, mean, and deſpicable Perſons. And when they ſeek to atchieve it, not by fraud, or indirect arts, or quaint ſpeeches, or ſly allurements, but by meekly telling a plain ſtory concerning *Jeſus*, and hoping to prevail and conquer all, not by Fighting, but Suffering for him. When a Religion, I ſay, that teaches ſuch hard and unwelcome Leſſons, and is managed by ſuch Inſtruments, and meets with ſuch oppoſitions, and has nothing humane great, or promiſing

miſing about it, but all things great, and, to reaſon, inſuperable againſt it, doth yet after all overſpread the World, at the ſame time all viſible Powers ſeem thus combined to drive it out of it: 'tis plain it is helped on by an *inviſible* Hand, and that God interpoſes to make it victorious. And I need not ſhow, how this was the caſe of Chriſtianity, in all theſe particulars.

Queſt. Thoſe Prophecies, which prefixt the exact time of *Meſſiah*'s coming, did plainly prove *Jeſus* to be the Man, becauſe none ſtarted up at the time appointed, to make any competition. But if there had, theſe other ſigns, which you have given from them, are ſo great, ſo peculiar, and, ſo obvious, I will not ſay, to be obſerved, but ſo hard, and almoſt impoſſible, when brought to paſs, to be overlooked, as muſt needs to the ſatisfaction of all reaſonable inquirers, demonſtrate him to be the Perſon againſt all pretenders.

Anſ. Moſt certainly they would, to all that knew his Story, what he was, and did, and would take the pains to compare it with theſe diſtinguiſhing marks, which the Holy Prophets ſeveral hundred Years before had given of him. For had any *falſe Chriſt* appeared exactly in *the fulneſs of time*, (as through the care of God's watchful Providence, no one then made any pretence beſides him:) yet had it been eaſie to ſhow ſuch deceiver was not the *Chriſt* whom the Prophets foretold, becauſe he was not born

born of a pure Maid, whereto no Man but our Saviour ever pretended. Or becauſe, if he did at ſome times ſhew ſome feats of Magick, as the Enchanters whom *Joſephus* mentions, yet he was not withal eminent for Piety, or had not the Spirit reſting upon him, to do Cures on all occaſions, and of all ſorts, or to caſt out Devils of whatever kind, and numbers, which no Man but *Jeſus* ever enjoyed. Or becauſe, though he might die for his Impoſture, as he juſtly deſerved, yet his Death was not in that way they had deſcribed, nor with thoſe many notable circumſtances they had prefixed for it. Nor would any ſuch *falſe Chriſts* riſe again from the Dead, as God plainly promiſed *Meſſiah* ſhould, and our *Jeſus* did. Nor were they any of them the Authors of a new Covenant, which ſupplied what the Covenant from *Mount Sinai* wanted. Neither did they erect a Kingdom, taking in the *Gentiles*, as well as the *Jewiſh* Nation: nor had Kings and Queens to come and worſhip, and pay homage to them. Nor did they convert the *Gentile* World from the worſhip of Idols, and drive the Devils out of all their Temples, as he did moſt gloriouſly by his appearance.

Queſt. But after all theſe inſtances, of a punctual, and exact accompliſhment of the ancient Prophecies in *Jeſus*, doth not *Iſaiah* foretel, that in *Meſſiah's days, the Wolf ſhall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard*

pard with the Kid, that the ſucking Child ſhall play ſafely *on the hole of the Aſp*, and *they ſhall not hurt, nor deſtroy in all Gods holy mountain*, Iſaiah 11. 6, 7, 8, 9. That then Men *ſhall beat their ſwords into plow-ſhares, and their ſpears into pruning-hooks, nation ſhall not lift up ſword againſt nation, neither ſhall they learn war any more*, Iſaiah 2. 4. By theſe, and ſuch like Prophecies, *Meſſiah* was to bring in a marvellous Probity, and univerſal Peace into the World. And amidſt all the injuries, the bitter Contentions, and bloody Wars among Chriſtians, how is this accompliſhed?

Anſ. Theſe Prophecies ſpeak not this of all Perſons in his days, but only of all that will be his true followers, and govern themſelves according to Prince *Meſſiah*'s Laws, and Practice. For that, which ſhall prevent all *doing hurt among them*, ſays *Iſaiah*, is *the full knowledge of the Lord*, which reſtrains only ſuch, as will practiſe what they underſtand, *Iſaiah* 11. 9. And they, who *ſhall beat their ſwords into plow ſhares*, ſays he again, are *the many people*, whom *Meſſiah ſhall rebuke*, which, according to the uſual Phraſe of Scripture, may imply their amending upon his rebuking them, *Iſaiah* 2. 4. They were the ſincerely devout, and honeſtly obedient, who ſay to one another, *Let us go up to the houſe of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in them*, verſe 3. But as for the inviolable maintenance of this Probity and Peace,

Peace, by those, who are only his nominal Servants, or by the universality of Men in his days, that doth not follow from these places; nor doth it well comport with the present state of human Nature, which is mixt with many angry, and incroaching Passions; nor suit with other Prophecies before-mentioned, that speak of much wickedness after *Messiah*'s coming, and of many still retaining their old genius, which Predictions must all be accomplished, as well as these.

Quest. But if this Peace and Probity are to be so limited, and conditionate in the event, how come they to be expressed so generally, and absolutely in the Prediction? Is it not odd to speak of an effect as universal under *Messiah*, which shall not appear universally in all under him, but only in those that will hearken to him?

Ans. No; for in an effect, wherein both he, and they are joyntly concerned, his saying all shall do it, implies they shall so far, as concerns his part, and that he would do all which behoves him towards it. And this *Jesus* has done, giving a Law as apt to engender, and preserve Peace, as any Law can be, and taking away all separating and dividing rites introduced by *Moses* which were apt to make difference between *Jews* and *Gentiles*. And to say *all Men shall do a thing*, when God has done his part to make them do it, though, through their obstinate wickedness, many of them

will not do it in the event, is a form of Speech usual in Holy *Scripture*. Thus it is particularly in *Ezekiel*, when God foretels the *taking away all detestable Idols*; and yet in the same place speaks of several, who would still *retain* them, and thereby incur his heavy indignation, *Ezekiel* 11. 18, 21. And in *Jeremy*, when God foretels *his peoples living again in their own land after the captivity*, most *piously*, and *peaceably*, Jer. 32. 37, &c. although, through their stubborn wickedness, which nothing would amend, things fell out contrary.

Quest. But though these Prophecies do not imply, that every Man shall live so when *Messiah* comes, yet however they seem to note that many will, who would not otherwise; and that Godliness, Peace, and Justice, shall mightily increase in the World by his appearance. And has this been fulfilled by *Jesus*?

Ans. Yes, it was eminently verified in the first times. For then the Christians were remarkably, as the most virtuous livers, and honest dealers, so most kind, and friendly among themselves; *See*, * said the *Gentiles*, *how the Christians love one another*. They were absolutely the best Neighbours, being so far from offering any injuries, that they durst not requite them, but with Prayers and Kindnesses. They were indisputably the most tame, and peaceable Subjects, overcoming all the outragious violence, and oppressions of their Persecutors,

* *Tertull. Apol.* 39.

cutors, not by fighting their way through them, but by *Faith* and *Patience* under them. And like effects, his Religion has produced in all other times, upon all thoſe, who were true followers both of him and them, and were Chriſtians in very deed, not only in name and profeſſion. It has improved all peaceable tempers, and ſweetned many ſowre, and ſmoothed many rough ones, and brought Men of the moſt different Complexions, Eſtates, Intereſts, and Abilities, to live fairly and ſociably together. Indeed, all Men are not thereby made godly, juſt, and tame, as we muſt not expect they ever will be in this World; for Men will be Men, and ſhew human paſſions, and errors, under any inſtitution. But yet the common eſtate of the World is much amended, and things generally much more fairly, and equitably managed, and the true God more duly and devoutly worſhipped, and all Virtue and Piety in greater repute, and Injuſtice much curbed, and both private, and publick Quarrels, much more frequently prevented, and more fairly and ſpeedily compoſed ſince *Chriſt*'s coming amongſt us, than they were before. So that although the improvement of theſe Virtues among us, is little in reſpect of our aids, and opportunities; yet is it great in compariſon with the former face of the World, and may paſs for a New, Righteous, and reformed State, in reſpect of what it was in days of *Heathen* ignorance. And

this is as much accomplishment, as 'tis reasonable to require in such Prophecies; which being made of men, who have frail and corrupt Natures, and converse in the midst of temptations, ought not to be strained beyond what is consistent with the condition of this World, and with human Nature, and Circumstances. But if the above cited Prophecies did really speak of a more universal effect, than has been hitherto accomplished: there is time enough still behind, ere *Christ* resign up the Kingdom to the Father, wherein to make it good. For of the things predicted to fall out under *Messiah*, some came to pass at first, and others, in the long flux of time ever since, have still been successively fulfilled; but many are still behind, and to have no accomplishment, till near the day of Judgment.

Quer. You have fully shewed, how *Jesus* appears to be the *Christ* from *ancient Prophecies*, whereby I plainly perceive how deservedly in the *Revelations*, the *Spirit of Prophecy* is called *the Testimony of Jesus*, Rev. 19. 10. But do the Jews, to whom these Prophets all spake, and who not only had the keeping, but were also most diligent and careful in examining these *Oracles*, understand these places as Predictions of *Messiah*, which appear to have had such clear, and undeniable accomplishment in our *Jesus*?

Ans.

Anſ. The old *Jews*, who lived before *Chriſt*, generally did, as is plain from *Rabbi Nehumiar*, and others, and from their general expectation of him about the time preſcribed, according to thoſe Prophecies. And ſo did numbers of their earlieſt, and moſt renowned Doctors ſince, as learned Men have ſhown abundantly from their Writings. But many of the later *Rabbins*, not daring to denie the ſuitableneſs of the events in *Jeſus*, have choſe rather to wreſt thoſe places, againſt their plain meaning, and the opinions of their Anceſtors, to other purpoſes, and deny them as ſpoken of *Meſſiah*. And what ſhould make this difference, and cauſe later Men to go off from ancient times, even from thoſe, who lived near to ſome of the Prophets themſelves, who, if they gave any hints, and interpretations of what they delivered in their own days, were moſt likely to gather up, and underſtand ſuch traditionary Explications? The reaſon of this difference is pretty obvious. For thoſe ancient *Jews*, living before *Chriſt*, looked only to the Prophecies themſelves, and the general ſenſe and expectation raiſed about them by the Prophets: But among the *Jews* ſince *Chriſt*, ſeveral look alſo at perſonal prejudices, and had rather deny any thing, than own *Jeſus* to be *Meſſiah*, which they cannot well avoid doing, if thoſe places are ſpoken of him.

CHAP. III.

Proving Jeſus to be the Chriſt, from other Divine Teſtimonies.

The Contents.

Jeſus proved to be the Chriſt, 2. *From the teſtimony of* John *the Baptiſt.* John *knew this by Revelation, and had it confirmed by a ſign. He was an acknowledged Prophet, and of moſt clear and currant fame. And gave this teſtimony, before he was perſonally acquainted with Jeſus.* 3. *From the teſtimony of Jeſus himſelf ſeveral conſiderations ſhewing the validity of this teſtimony, though it were in his own caſe. This not impugned by Chriſt's words,* John 5. 31. *nor gives any colour or advantage to Fanatical Enthuſiaſts.* 4. *From his Miracles. Theſe no lying wonders, as may appear, becauſe ſhewn in ſeveral inſtances not imitable by Demons. As,* 1. *Foretelling future Contingencies. An account of Demon-Predictions among the* Gentiles. 2. *Diſcerning Hearts, and Thoughts.* 3. *Raiſing the Dead.* 4. *Caſting out Devils, of moſt ſtubborn ranks, and in greateſt numbers and combinations. It may alſo appear from their intent and deſign; and*

from

from their numbers, and the manner of working them. No oppoſing the Miracles of Moſes *againſt Chriſt's Miracles becauſe they were wrought to ſet aſide the Law of* Moſes. *That Law was given with a deſign to be altered. An account how for all that, ſeveral of its Precepts are juſtly called Statutes for ever. 5. From the teſtimony of the Father, who declared Jeſus to be the Chriſt by audible voices. And by raiſing him from the dead, and ſhewing him in full poſſeſſion of his pretences.*

Queſtion. BUT beſides this proof of *Jeſus* being the *Chriſt*, from *ancient Prophecies*, you ſaid the ſame would be evidently made out, by *ſeveral Divine Teſtimonies other ways.* Pray what are thoſe Teſtimonies?

Anſ. The Teſtimony of *John the Baptiſt*, who was ſent into the World to give Witneſs to it; the Teſtimony of *Jeſus himſelf*, which very well deſerves to be truſted; the Teſtimony of his *miraculous works*, which are an evidence drawn up by the Finger of God; and, to name no more, the Teſtimony of *God the Father*, who himſelf became a Voucher of it. So that he muſt give the lye, both to Heaven, and Earth, to God, and Men, who ſhall disbelieve, or gainſay it.

Anſ. Did *John the Baptiſt* teſtifie *Jeſus* to be *the Chriſt?*

Ans. Yes, and that upon a most publick occasion, when the *great Council of the Nation*, the *Sanhedrim*, *sent Priests and Levites* to him on purpose, to know whether he himself *were the Christ*, John 1. 19. For then his answer was, That *he was not the Christ*, verse 20. but that the *Christ* was *come*, and was then *among them*, verse 26, 27. Yea, *the next day seeing Jesus coming to him*, he points at him, and declares to them all, that he is the Person. *Behold*, saith he, *the Lamb of God, which takes away the sins of the world. This is he, of whom I said, after me comes a man, which is preferred before me*, verse 29, 30. which Testimony he repeats again *the next day*, upon another occasion, *verse* 35, 36. And this Testimony *Jesus* alledged for himself when he reasoned with the *Jews*, in vindication of his own Authority. *Ye sent unto John*, viz. in the message from *Jerusalem, and he bare witness unto the truth*, John 5. 33.

Quest. But how came *John* to know it, and why in this case must we take his word?

Ans. Because he was a *Prophet*, *all the Jews*, as the Scriptures testifie, *held John for a Prophet*, Matth. 21. 26. Nay, as *Christ* says, he was one of the greatest of Prophets, for *of all that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater, than John the Baptist*, Matth. 11. 9, 11. And he declares, that *the Spirit revealed this to him*: nay, that, for his greater confirmation, it gave him a visible

ſible and moſt illuſtrious ſign; *ſaying unto him, Upon whom thou ſhalt ſee the Spirit deſcend, and remain on him, that ſame is he.* And *this Spirit, John* declares he *did ſee deſcend* in a *bodily ſhape* upon *Jeſus* at his *Baptiſm*, and at the ſame time, as S. *Matthew* * adds, *heard a voice from God*, calling him *his beloved Son* for his fuller conviction, *John* 1. 32, 33. Yea, ſince, as the *Nazarene* Goſpel relates it, upon this deſcent, preſently there *ſhone a great light about the place*; and *a fire was lighted in Jordan* wherein *John* Baptized him, as † *Juſtin* the *Martyr* teſtifies: what would ſtill be a more aſſuring proof to *John* in this caſe, this *bodily deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt*, was in a body of Light and dazling Splendor, the uſual Glory wherein God himſelf was wont to appear, which hovering over our Saviour, as a Dove doth when it lights, and darting forth its bright Beams round about him, did plainly repreſent what the *Jews* call the *Schechinah*, and proclaim him to be a Divine Perſon. Thus did *John* know *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah*, by an evidence infallible, and every way convincing. And this he teſtifies of him, not as a thing by the bye, but ſays it was the very Errand whereon he was ſent, and for declaration whereof he was called out by God to be a *Prophet*. *That he ſhould be made manifeſt to Iſrael*, ſays he, *therefore am I come*, John 1. 31.

* Matth. 3. 16, 17.

† *Dial. cum Tryph.*

Queſt.

Quest. Indeed, if *John* had such Revelations of this matter, as he declares, 'tis plain he was not deceiv'd about it himself, but spoke out of sober knowledge, and certain grounds. So that if there is no cause to question his honesty, there is no getting off from his Testimony. But what can you say to show him a true and honest Man, who would not feign things to deceive others?

Ans. His Sanctity, and Integrity, were the honour, and admiration of his own times. He led a most mortified, rigid Life, neither caring how hard his Fare was, nor how coarse his Habit. He *neither eat Bread, nor drank Wine*, whence in *Scripture* he is said to *come, neither eating, nor drinking*, i. e. not living upon the usual Diet of other Men, *Matth.* 11. 18. compared with *Luke* 7. 33. *His meat was locusts, and wild hony; and* all *his rayment of camels hair, girt about him with a leathern girdle*, Matth. 3. 4. And thus voluntarily abandoning, I will not say the pleasures, but even the ease, and common conveniences of the Flesh, he was not capable to be tempted by them. He was eminently above all affectation of Power, or Praise; insomuch, that when all were ready to receive him for *Messiah*, he told them he * *was not worthy to unty his shoes*, and was glad when he could fix that Honour on *Jesus*, whose right it was, declaring openly, *he must increase, but I must decrease*, John 3. 29, 30, 31. He was illustrious for Piety,

* John 1. 27.

Piety, and moſt bold and zealous in reproving Vice, as he fully manifeſted by his undaunted freedom, in cenſuring the ſins of all *ſtates*, and *ſorts* of People, as *they came to him* for *Baptiſm*, Matth. 3. And as for his ſincerity and plain-dealing, till *Jeſus* came, they could not in all that Age ſhow ſuch a down-right, honeſt Man. When *Herod* ſet his heart upon him, and loved to hear him, his growing great at *Court* did not make him ſwerve in the leaſt from his Country ſimplicity, or teach him how to flatter, nor would he there ſo much as connive at his *Prince's ſin*, though he was to loſe, not only his Favour, but his own Hearts Blood, for his plain freedom in taxing and *reproving* it, *Matth.* 14. 3, 4. 10.

Queſt. Theſe are ſignal proofs of an upright, honeſt Man. But did the *Jews*, who lived in thoſe days, ſee all this in him?

Anſ. Yes, and honour and admire it too. *He was*, as *Chriſt* ſays, *a burning and a ſhining light* among them, *and for a while*, till he had diſguſted them by teſtifying ſo fully for *Jeſus*, they *were willing to rejoyce in him*, John 5. 35. *They all held him for a Prophet*, and ſo if they would be true to themſelves, ought ſurely to rely upon his word, *Matth.* 21. 26. They thought it not enough to Admire and Praiſe, but thronged in to become his *Diſciples*, and *Followers*: and thoſe that did ſo, were not only the ignorant vulgar, but the moſt learned and beſt reputed *Sects*, the *Phariſees and Sadducees*, who

came,

came, desiring to receive *Baptism* at his hands, *Matth.* 3. 7. Nay, they did not only repute him for a *Prophet*, but fancied him the greatest of all Prophets, the *Christ*, whom all desired, and expected. And this was not barely the surmize of some private Men, but the opinion of the *Sanhedrim*, that Great Council and Representative of the *Jewish* Nation. For they sent Deputies to him, a select number of *Priests, and Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him* this Question, *John* 1. 19. Thus great, and currant was *John*'s Fame in the *Jewish* Nation, as is declared also by † *Josephus* a *Jewish* Historian; which, when they begun to value him less, out of their hatred to *Jesus* to whom he bore witness, was yet of such awful Authority and Account, that they, who would not receive durst not openly gainsay it; as the *Pharisees* durst not, who, when *Jesus* pressed them with *John*'s Testimony for his Authority, pitifully sneaked, and openly refused to give any Answer to it, *Matth.* 21. 27.

† *Antiq. l.* 18. *c.* 7.

Quest. But was not *Jesus John*'s Friend? And though he was too mortified to be tempted, and too honest to be gained by any thing else; yet might not affection blind his Eyes, and he fancy more, and speak things greater, than were true of *Jesus*, out of Friendship?

Ans. No, if he had been an old Friend, the grounds *John* gives are so clear and full, as could not in any reason be questioned. But,

But, what is ſtill a further circumſtance in this Teſtimony, he is careful to tell us, that he declared this of *Jeſus*, before they were acquainted. For when he gives his Teſtimony to him, after he had ſeen the *Holy Ghoſt* deſcend upon him at his *Baptiſm*, *I knew him not*, ſays he, *but he that ſent me to baptize with water, the ſame ſaid unto me, Upon whom thou ſhalt ſee the Spirit deſcending, and remaining on him, that ſame is he that baptizeth with the Holy Ghoſt. And* this *I ſaw* by him, *and bare record*, John 1. 33, 34. 'Tis true, when he came to him for *Baptiſm*, which was before he had ſeen this ſign, or made this declaration, S. *Matthew* ſays, *John knew him*, and thereupon would have put him by, as *having more need to be baptized of him*, Matt. 3. 14. But that was purely by *Revelation* the ſame Spirit then ſuggeſting the preſence of *Meſſiah* to *John*, that *made him leap for joy in the womb*, at the *ſalutation of the bleſſed Virgin*, after She had conceived him *Luc.* 1. 44. But till he gave this Teſtimony to him, he knew him not as a Friend or Acquaintance, nor had any former Converſation, or correſpondence paſſed between them.

Queſt. No wonder this Teſtimony ſhould over-awe the *Jews*, when *Jeſus* urged it for himſelf, though it could not convince them.

But beſides this Teſtimony of *John* the *Baptiſt*, you mentioned alſo the Teſtimony of *Jeſus himſelf*, as deſerving credit. Pray clear up that.

Anſ.

Anſ. This alſo *Jeſus* alledges for himſelf, and ſtands upon it. *I am one that bear witneſs of my ſelf, and my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go*, John 8. 14, 18.

Queſt. But this is only his own word, in his own caſe. And Men are too apt to ſay great, and undue things of themſelves, out of a deſire of Honour, or Advantage. And if we believe all on their own ſayings, we muſt believe all deceivers: for the rankeſt Impoſtors are true Men, if we dare truſt themſelves.

Anſ. True, indeed, it were as unreaſonable to believe all, as to believe none. But in theſe caſes, we are to put a difference between Witneſſes, and not to truſt the accounts given of themſelves by all, but only by credible Perſons. In particular, if it appears of any Man, that he is not fanciful, falſe, or deſigning; we ſhould be very inclinable to believe his account: eſpecially, if God had ſet ſome extraordinary atteſting marks upon him, or ſhewed ſome Miracles about him, or if he himſelf, which was the † *Legal* Teſt of Prophets, ſhould give ſome extraordinary ſign to gain credit. All which moſt eminently concur in this Teſtimony, which *Jeſus* gave of himſelf, for *his being the Chriſt*.

† Deut. 18. 22.

Queſt. Doth it appear that *Jeſus* was no fanciful Man, apt to take up Opinions on ſlight grounds, or preſume things, eſpecially in favour of himſelf, without reaſon?

Anſ.

Anſ. Yes, for in all his carriage, as he appeared moſt humble, and ſelf-denying; ſo did he clearly manifeſt, not only a moſt quick and penetrating, but alſo a moſt ſober, and conſiderate Wiſdom. In all his life, he was never ſeen to be precipitate in any Counſels, nor preſumptuous in any Conceits, nor miſtaken in any Opinions and Reſolutions, but could ſolve clearly all Queſtions, and ſhew the true weight, and juſt validity of all Arguments. Even they, who would not receive his Wiſdom, could not but admire it, and the very *Officers* ſent to apprehend him, returned *ſaying, Never man ſpake like this man*, John 7. 46. Beſides, the things whereon * he builds his own Credit, are not any conjectural Speculations, or diſputable Opinions, but plain matters of Fact: ſuch as his † *living*, and *converſing with God in Heaven*, long *before he came into the world*; his * *coming out from him*, and *ſpeaking what he* † *ſaw*, and heard *him* declare, whilſt he lay from Eternal Ages in his Boſom. And theſe, if they are untruths, cannot be fancies, but downright Forgeries, and Impoſtures: they argue not ſo much an Enthuſiaſtical, as a falſe and deſigning Man, ſince no Perſon in his wits, as 'tis moſt evident he was, could fancy himſelf into ſuch perſuaſions. And thus, it ſeems, the Adverſaries of *Jeſus* themſelves believed. For they never once accuſed him, as being a deluded Enthuſiaſt, but always as a falſe Impoſtor, who

* John 8. 14.

† John 17. 5.

* John 16. 28. & 8. 42.

† John 8. 38.

who craftily invented those pretensions, which he sought to impose upon the world, *Matth.* 27. 63. & *John* 7. 12.

Quest. Was he also as apparently honest, and undesigning?

Ans. Yes, for never Man sought so little for himself, or did so much for others, making it his *meat and drink* to bring Glory unto God, and dispense Blessings to the World. Whatsoever he claimed, or did, was in pursuit of those publick ends; not at all to greaten his own secular State and Power, or to gratifie his own Will and Humour. And on this score he calls upon all Men to believe him, as one that visibly could have no temptation to deceive, and plainly sought to serve no ends of his own upon them. *My judgment is just*, saith he, *because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father, which hath sent me*, John 5. 30.

Quest. *Two* great things there are, which Men may seek by such pretences: *Interest*, that ratifies the covetous; and *Honour*, that Idol of the ambitious, and vain glorious. And doth it plainly appear of *Jesus*, that in pursuing his pretensions, he sought neither of these?

Ans. Yes, For as for *Honour*, though by his miraculous Power, he did every where the most stupendious things: yet was he never tempted to do any one out of vanity, to set on his own Praises; but only as occasion was given him by the requests, or needs of

of Men; or as he saw they might serve to accomplish God's ends. Yea, after the miraculous Cures were done, he several times imposed *silence* on * those he cured, or those who were privy to it, to stifle the spreading of his own Fame. He gave the Honour of all he did to God, declaring, That † *of himself he could do nothing*, but that *his* * *finger* wrought all the works they so much admired, and directing them to *adore*, and *laud* him for them, as accordingly they † did. And then, as for *worldly interest*, though he pretended to come as a *Prince* and *Shepherd*, yet he declared that was not to serve himself of his People, but to serve them, and shed his *Hearts Blood for them*. And all Men must needs say he seeks no private interest, or self design who comes among Men, only to have the opportunity to die for them. And being thus apparently free from all designs, or endeavours, of seeking his own interest, or applause; upon this score he calls upon all reasonable Men to receive his Testimony. *The good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep: I am the good Shepherd*, for *I lay down my life for them*, John 10. 11, 15. *I honour my father*, says he again, *and seek not mine own glory. He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him*, John 8. 49, 50. & 7. 18.

* Matth 8. 4 & 9 30. & 12. 16.

† John 5. 30. & 14. 10.

* Luke 11. 20.

† Matth. 9. 8 & 15. 31. Luke 7 16. & 18. 43.

Quest. Indeed, such manifestations of sober Wisdom, and undesigning Integrity, are enough to gain great regard to any Man's account. But, as you said, it would be of more force still, if God, by extraordinary Providences, and miraculous Events, brought to pass for, or about a Person, should prepossess the World with a great Opinion, and raise in all Men some extraordinary expectations from him. And was this done for *Jesus*, when he came?

Ans. Yes, for, besides that a *confessed Prophet* was sent in God's Name, as I shewed, on purpose to declare him; a Train of *Revelations*, and *Miracles*, was laid by Almighty God, to prepare his way, and usher him in. *One* Angel is sent to his *Mother*, then and afterwards a Virgin, with the news of his Miraculous Conception; *another* to clear her Honour, and satisfie her jealous Husband; and a whole * *Host* of them are heard to sing *Anthems* of Joy and Praise at his Birth, declaring to the *Shepherds*, that he was *Christ the Lord*. A prodigious *Star*, of an irregular place and motion, is created to lead some great Men of the *East*, to the place where he was. Who, coming by its guidance to *Jerusalem* in search of him, put King *Herod*, and all the *Jews*, into an anxious fear and consternation. And being led on farther by it, to *Bethlehem*, to the very House where he lay, they most solemnly paid their Homage and Devotion, *offering him Gifts, Gold, Frankincense,*

* Luke 2.

Matth. 2.

kincense, and Myrrh. And to heighten the observation, and perpetuate the memory of these things, a strange instance of most lamentable, and unheard of cruelty accompanied them. For at the *Wise Mens* report, *Herod* growing jealous of this new King, and not being able to learn where he was, that, under pretence of going to Worship, he might seize and devour him, they failing to *bring him word* according to their promise, through *God's warning* them to the contrary *in a Dream*: in his Bloody Rage he *slew all the Children, under two years old, in Bethlehem, and all the coasts thereof*, assuredly concluding he should cut off him among them. Besides all which, at *the* * *accomplishment* of his Mothers *days of Purification*, when he was brought into the Temple, † *Simeon* (Son, as is supposed, to the Great *Hillel*, and Father to *Gamaliel* and * *Hannah*, two Persons eminent for Piety and Holiness, and known, though not in ordinary course, yet at some times to be acted by a *Prophetick Spirit*, which, having ceased among the *Jews* for *four* hundred Years, ever since *Zechary* and *Malachy*, begun then to revive again, did own him for the *Christ of God*, and *spoke of him to all that looked for Redemption in Jerusalem.* All these, with a number of other great Signs shewed about him, were most publickly known among the *Jews*, and were the wonder, and discourse of that time, and must needs raise in Mens minds strange expectations

* Luke 2. 22.

† Ver. 25, 26. &c.

* Ver. 36, 37, 38, &c.

from him. And seeing him thus visibly sent of God, they would be the more prepared, when he declared himself, to give him credit. Especially, when they knew him still more Gloriously set out, and all the foregoing Signs advanced and confirmed, by the *visible descent of the Holy Ghost* upon him, and the *voice from Heaven* accompanying it, at his *Baptism*, when he begun his *Preaching*.

Quest. And to all this, did he also himself give them a *Sign* for his own justification?

Ans. Yes, and the very same too, that *Moses* prescribed for a proof of any Man's being sent of God as a Prophet, *viz. his fore telling things to come*, Deut. 18. 22. For this *Jesus* did among them, and that too on this very score, according to the rule of *Moses* to justifie *his Mission*. His *own Resurrection*, under the Type of *Jonas*, he gives to the *Jews* for a *sign*, Matth. 12. 40. And *Judas*'s *Treason* he foretold to his Disciples before it happened, *that* thereby, saith he, *when it is come to pass, you may believe that I am he*, John 13. 19. And this alone is a sufficient vindication of his Testimony, if he could produce nothing else. For in a Legal Trial at the Bar of *Moses*, this would prove him a *true Prophet*. And that being once made out, his Testimony is no further to be questioned.

Quest.

Quest. Indeed, such personal endowments, and so miraculous an entry, are enough to gain credit to any Person, and make the World believe what he says, though he wrought no Miracles for confirmation.

Ans Very true, and so they did in *John*'s case. For *John*, as the *Scripture* says, *wrought no miracle*, John. 10. 41. But yet he was universally held for a Prophet, because of his eminent Integrity and Wisdom, and because his Conception was by a Mother barren and past Child-bearing, and was first revealed by the Message of an Angel, and his unbelieving Father struck dumb, and his Tongue as miraculously looſed again upon the Child's Birth to Propheſie concerning him; by all which he was notoriously known to be a *Child of Miracles*, though he *wrought none* And all these, as I have noted, were far more eminent in *Jesus*, which therefore in all equity and reason should have gained him credit, and make him pass for a Prophet, as *John* did. Besides, that *Jesus* gave them Predictions, the Legal proof of true Prophets, which had been enough to authorize and justifie his Witness, had it come backed with no other credentials.

Quest. You have shewn reason enough, why *Jesus*'s report of himself should be trusted, since it came thus well fortified.

Ans. Yes, this shows him a most creditable Witness, whilst he appeared among us, to testifie for himself here *on Earth*. But besides that, he has moreover showed himself several times since he *went to Heaven*, particularly to *Stephen*, and *Saul*, giving them an ocular evidence, by appearing in actual Possession of his Pretences. And this exhibition of himself, in Glorious Majesty at God's own Throne, doth as convincingly speak him to be *Christ the King*, as any Man's Personal appearance and presentation of himself, can prove him to be a live Person. In doubt of a thing's existing in any condition, there is no such satisfactory proof, as if the thing presents it self, and shews its state by ocular demonstration.

Quest. But after all that you have said, about the validity of this Testimony of *Jesus* in his own case, doth not *Jesus* himself say the contrary, when he tells the *Jews*, *If I bear witness of my self, my witness is not true*, John 5. 31.

Ans. By *not true*, he means not that 'tis no real Truth, nor that it is no proof of Truth; for in another place he says expressly, *though I bear record of my self, my witness is true*, John 8. 14. But only that it will not pass in Law for a proof of Truth. And that, not for any defect in the kind, but only in the tale and number of Evidence. For *their Law*, as he notes, required *two Witnesses*. So that although his own Testimony were one good proof, yet being

ing but one, it was of it ſelf alone no full proof, but wanted the Teſtimony of *his Father* too to make it a Legal Evidence, *John* 8. 17, 18. And accordingly in the place objected, when he ſays his own is no good Teſtimony, in the next words he adds, *there is another that beareth witneſs of me*, which making up the Legal number if added to his own, would make an undeniable Teſtimony, *John* 5. 32.

Queſt. But after all, will not this taking the word of *Jeſus* in his own caſe, give colour and credit to deſigning Impoſtors, and *Fanatical Enthuſiaſts?*

Anſ. It would, if he, or they were to be believ'd upon their bare ſayings. But there is do danger at all of that, if, to back them, they muſt produce ſuch Credentials, as I have ſet off in his caſe. For to be ſure upon examination, they will appear, either not to be Perſons of ſober and ſolid reaſon, or not exempt from all juſt ſuſpicion of vanity and ſelf deſign, or to want an extraordinary and miraculous introduction. Not to mention moreover, that they will have no acknowledged Prophet to bear Witneſs to them, and that they will fail of giving a Sign and Prediction, which, according to the ſtricteſt Teſt of *Moſes*, was anſwered and made good by him. Which great differences, make their words in their own caſe, to be only either a forged, or a Fanatical bold Saying, which was ſober Truth, and ſolid Evidence in him.

Quest. Besides these Testimonies, for *Jesus being the Messiah*, you mentioned a *third*, viz. his *miraculous works*, which you called an *Evidence drawn up by the finger of God.* I pray you declare that.

Ans. This *Jesus* often urges for himself, and that too as of greater validity, than either *his own*, or *John*'s Testimony. *I have greater witness, than that of John; for the works, which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me*, John 5. 36. And *if I do the works of my Father, though you believe not me, believe the works*, John 10. 37, 38.

Quest. Indeed, in pretence that any thing comes from God, Signs and Miracles are a convincing argument. For being a visible effect, as our Saviour said, of the *finger of God*, they show evidently that God espouses the Person who is impowered to work them, and will employ his Almighty Power to make his Sayings good. But one great difficulty lies in the way of this Evidence, and that is, that Miracles, or things seemingly as strange as they, which we cannot distinguish from them, are oft-times wrought by *Satan* and *his Agents.* As they were by * *Jannes* and *Jambres*, the *Egyptian Magicians*, in their contest with *Moses*: and by *false Christs*, and *false Prophets*, who, as our Saviour foretold, *should shew signs and wonders*, Matth. 24. 24. and by the great *Antichrist* and *Man of sin*, whose coming,

* 2 Tim. 3. 8.

ing, S *Paul* declares, ſhould *be after the working of Satan, with all power, and ſigns, and lying wonders*, 2 Theſſ. 2. 9 And if *Satan* works Miracles, or, which in effect is all one, what we ſhall take for ſuch, to credit falſe Impoſtors, as well as God doth to juſtifie true Prophets; how ſhall we diſtinguiſh theſe, and know of the Signs which *Jeſus* gave us, whether they are Divine Miracles, that evidence a true Man, or only Feats of Magick, which are ſhewn by many falſe Men?

Anſ. They are eaſily diſtinguiſhed, by the whole kind of ſome, and by the intent and deſign of all of them.

Queſt. I pray you inſtance to me in ſome, where they are diſtinguiſhed by the whole kind. That is, of ſome ſorts of Miracles done by *Jeſus*, which are peculiar to God, and which cannot be performed by any unclean Spirit.

Anſ. One is *foretelling future contingencies*, which *Jeſus* did ſeveral times. Particularly he foretold his *own* **death*, and the ſtrange kind of it, by hanging after the *Roman* way *upon a* † *Croſs* which was not only moſt accidental, but moſt improbable, ſince if he was taken off at all, it was not like to be by *Roman*, but *Jewiſh* malice. He foretold alſo that *Judas*, one of his own Diſciples, ſhould *betray him*, and that before he was given up to *Satan to enter into him*, or *Judas* himſelf, 'tis like, ever thought of any ſuch thing: nay, *he knew it*, ſays S. *John*, *from*

* Matth. 16. 21.
† Matth. 20. 19.

from the very *beginning*, John 6. 64, 70, 71. And that *Peter* ſhould *deny him*, yea, and that juſt *thrice*, *before the Cock crew twice*, Mark 14. 30. whereas, thoſe three occaſions of his denial, were then not only in themſelves moſt uncertain, but at the ſame time *Peter* made ſo ſure of his not denying him at all, that he confidently ſaid, he would *rather die with him*, than do it *in any wiſe*, Verſe 31. To theſe I might add, his Prediction of the Bloody * *perſecutions of his Diſciples*, the unhappy † *ſucceſs of falſe Prophets*, the *continuance* of his *Church and Religion*, though ever and anon groaning under moſt heavy Sufferings, to the * *worlds end*; with many others.

* Matth. 24. 9, 10.
† Matth. 24. 11, 12.
* Matth. 28. 20. & 16. 18.

Queſt. Is this *Prediction of future Contingencies*, a work peculiar to the All-ſeeing God, and above the skill of all infernal Spirits?

Anſ. Yes, and thence 'tis called *Divination*, as manifeſting the *Divinity* of a Being. And accordingly herein God challenges all the pretended Gods of the *Heathens*; ſaying, *Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are Gods*, Iſaiah 41. 23. And this the Devils plainly manifeſt themſelves unable to do, by the *Ambiguity* of their *Oracles*, when they are conſulted in theſe caſes. For not knowing what will be the event of things, they uſe artifice in words, and frame Reſponſes of ſuch doubtful conſtruction, as are liable to be turned both ways, and

ſo

ſo equally capable of being verified by all events. Such was the noted Anſwer of the Devil at *Delphos*, cited by * *Cicero* from *Ennius*, which he is ſaid to have given to *Pyrrhus* King of *Epirus*, when he conſulted him about the iſſue of the War with the *Romans*:

* *De Divin. l. 2.*

Aio te Æacida Romanos vincere poſſe.

Which, according to the different ways Men ſhould begin the conſtruction, was equally good *Latin*, and would be equally true, whether *he* ſhould conquer the *Romans*, or *they* ſhould conquer *him*. And ſuch alſo was that other Anſwer, which he cites from *Herodotus*, ſaid to be given to *Cræſus* King of *Lydia*, when he went againſt *Cyrus*:

Cræſus Halym penetrans magnam pervertet opum vim,

That is, if he paſſed the River *Halys* againſt *Cyrus*, he ſhould conſume a vaſt Wealth, and waſte a great Domination: which would be very true, whether it fell out to be theirs, or his own. Theſe ſtudiouſly uncertain, and ambiguous Anſwers, are a plain ſign the *Demon* was at a *non-plus*. Beſides, that future Contingencies are out of the reach, and foreſight of impure Spirits, is plain, becauſe thoſe cauſes are, whereon ſuch futurities depend.

For

For they are wrapt up in the free-will of Men, which the Devils cannot force, but only tempt: and in the Counsel, and Providence of Almighty God, whose early determinations are hid from them, and are a secret locked up in his own Breast.

Quest. But have not *Demons* oft foretold such futurities, as when * *Spurinna* the *Augur*, by the Diabolical signs in the Sacrifice, could warn *Julius Cæsar* of his danger such a day, if he went into the *Senate-House*?

* *Sutt. in Jul. c.* 81.

Ans. That the *Demon* might easily foretel, when the time, and place, and persons, and other circumstances of the Murder, had been resolved on among themselves, and he had been present, and principally influenced their Debates in all their Consults. Such Predictions are but like a seasonable discovery made by some of the Conspirators.

Quest. But what say you to Predictions of more remote things, as yet unconcerted among the immediate Actors, and to their foretelling the success of attempts, or expeditions, or other futurities of contingent nature, which the *Demons* often revealed to their Prophets, both by *Oracles*, *entrails of Sacrifices*, *feeding of Pullen*, and other ways in use among *Heathen Diviners*.

Ans. When they ventured at these, it was not with certainty and assurance, as infallible understandings; but only by guesses and conjectures, from the appearances

rances of things, their preparations, and probabilities, as politick observers, wherein they can go far, by reason of their great knowledge and experience. And when they were put to Answer on these points, if they were more distrustful of the issue, they gave ambiguous and uncertain Answers, capable of being verified by all events, which would be a sure reserve for their errors, as in the case of *Crœsus*, and *Pyrrhus*. But if the event seemed more likely, and they were presuming and bold enough to Answer plainly; then, since the effect would several times hit, as well as sometimes miss, they hoped all would be expounded in their favour, and their mistakes salved, by the Candor and Devotion of their Worshippers.

Quest. But do not you think *Demons* can speak of some such futurities in plain Speech, and there too with certainty and assurance?

Ans. Yes, some events are put into their hands, when any Persons are delivered to them, either for their *trial*, as *Job*, or for their *punishment*, as * *Ahab*. And after such delivery, they may foretel these events, as depending upon themselves. Thus might *Satan* easily have foretold the Invasions of the † *Chaldeans*, and *Sabeans*, upon *Job*'s *Oxen*, and *Camels*, after he had gained God's Licence: and *Judas*'s *Treason*, after he was delivered up to him, to * *enter into him*. And thus might they in the *Gentile Divinations*,

* 1 King. 22. 22.

† Job 1. 12, 15, 17.

* Luke 22. 3.

Divinations, foretel *cures of Diseases*, whereof by God's Commission they had been the Inflictors, *seeming then to cure, where they only ceased to kill*, as * *Tertullian* says. To predict such things, as are left to their Power and Ministry to accomplish, requires no more skill, than to know before-hand what they intend to do, and what are their own Decrees and Purposes. But 'tis beyond the fore-sight of any *Demons* to foretel such remote Contingencies, *before the abandoning of Persons*; as God doth frequently in the Holy Scriptures, declaring the most accidental things, which shall † *happen* to Men *yet* * *unborn*; or the most free and voluntary, which shall be * *done* by them. And as the Blessed *Jesus* did, and his *Apostles* after him by his Spirit, foretelling what should befal the whole Nation of the *Jews*, both young and old, after almost *forty* Years; and what should happen to his own Church, in remote Ages; and what should be, not only the temptations and trials, but the most contingent carriage and free actions of good Men, who were in God's Protection, and whom the impure Spirits could only tempt, not govern, as is plain among many others, in that of *Peter's thrice denying*, and the *Apostles forsaking* him.

* *Apol. c.* 22.

† Gen. 15. 13.1

* Jer. 25 12. & c.29 10.

* 1 King. 13. 2. & Isa. 44. 28.

Quest But the famed Oracles of the *Sibyls*, from which * *Virgil* transcribed some Predictions, and which started † *Cicero*, when the *Quindecemviri*, who had the custody

* *Eclog.* 4

† *De Divin. l.* 2.

dy and expoſition of them, were bringing out thence the news of a King into the Senate, were ſpoke of *Chriſt*, and fully verified in him, who was no *abandoned* Perſon. And did not *Demons* here foreſee, and foretel ſuch futurities, as depend on God, and were wrapt up, as you ſaid, in his Counſel?

Anſ. No, for very probably the Spirit that revealed thoſe things to theſe *Heathen Sibyls*, was not any infernal Spirit, but the Spirit of the true God, which ſometimes inſpired *Heathens*, as it did * *Balaam* the *Aramite*, to Propheſy of ſeveral events, particularly of *Meſſiah*, thereby even among the *Gentile* World, to raiſe an expectation of him, who was to be the † *deſire of all Nations*. Or, if they had it not from the Spirit of God at the firſt hand, yet had they it thence at the ſecond, *viz.* by reading it in the *Jewiſh* Prophets, by whom God had before foretold theſe things: which is a thing not improbable, ſince they expreſs them ſometimes in their very Forms, and Allegories. The *Demons* revealed not theſe things to their Prophets, or, if they did, the Prediction was not their own, but, as * *Tertullian* ſays, *they ſtole their Divination.*

* Num. 24.

† Hag. 2. 7.

* *Apol. c.* 22.

Queſt. The powers of darkneſs then, can only gueſs at ſuch futurities, whoſe cauſes are at work, and whereof they ſee ſigns and appearances, like Politicians; or diſcover things ready to take effect, when they

they have been in the club of the Actors and Conspirators; or presignifie what they intend to do with such, as God has delivered into their hands; or repeat Predictions, from God's true *Prophets* in the Holy Scriptures: in some one, or other whereof, did their fore-sight consist in *Heathen* Divinations. But as for the voluntary actions of all under God's Protection, and all such remote and contingent futurities, as are not determinable by natural causes, but depend upon Mens free-will, and God's free Providence, they are above their reach, so that we are sure of the true God where we have such Predictions?

Ans. Yes, and therefore it is evident *Jesus* came from God, because he, as I said, and his *Apostles* after him by his Spirit, did foretel such as these, as I have shewn in several instances.

Quest. What other Miracles did *Jesus* work, which are peculiar to God, and above the power of a wicked Spirit?

Ans. Secondly, He *saw into Mens hearts and secret thoughts*: discovering, before any outward proofs and manifestations, the fickleness of *some Disciples*, John 2. 24. and the veil'd falshood of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who stood as insidious Spies upon him, *Luke* 6. 8. and adapting his Answers, and Discourses, not only to Mens Questions, but also to their inward Thoughts and Surmizes, before they expressed and proposed them to him, as he did with *the Pharisees*,

Pharisees, Matth. 12. 25. and in several * other places. And this is another work, which God claims as peculiar to himself, stiling himself the *searcher of hearts, and trier of reins*; yea, claiming the knowledge of them for this reason, which is peculiar to him, because he is to judge, and recompence them. *I the Lord search the heart, and try the reins, to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings*, Jer. 17. 10. And *thou, even thou only knowest the hearts of all the children of men*, saith *Solomon*, 1 King. 8. 39.

* Luke 6. 8, 9. Matth. 9. 4.

Quest. Did *Jesus* any more Miracles, which are performable only by the *finger of God*, and are above the force of Magick?

Ans. Yes, *Thirdly*, He *raised the dead* as † *Jairus's daughter*; and *the* * *widows son* of *Nain*, when he was *carried out to be buried*; and † *Lazarus*, after he *had been four days dead*. And this again is peculiarly God's work. For when once Souls are separated from their Bodies, they undergo God's Sentence, and are secured in such places as he allots, whence they cannot return, or be remanded, but by his Licence, and Power, that effects all things. *There is no God with me, for I kill, and I make alive*, saith God by *Moses*, Deut. 32. 39. All separate Souls are under Locks and Keys, and that a Divine Hand, which holds *the keys of hell and of death*, Rev. 1. 18.

† Mar. 5. 42. * Luke 7. 12, 13, 14, 15. † John 11. 39, 44.

Quest. Have you any more instances?

Ans. Yes, *Fourthly*, *Casting out Devils.* And those not only where they were of the most stubborn sorts, which had proved * *too hard for his Disciples*: but also where they were in greatest numbers, the Devils ejected by him out of one Man, being called by themselves *Legion*; which notes a *Roman* Army of six thousand Men, *Mark* 5. 9. Yea, not only expelling, but as their awful Judge, whose Rod they dread, and at whose frown they tremble, terrifying them, and forcing them often to *cry out, Let us alone, thou Holy One of God, thou Son of God: we beseech thee torment us not, art thou come to torment us before the time?* Mark 1. 24. Luke 8. 28. Nay, he impowered the *seventy Disciples*, and afterwards the very meanest of his followers, in virtue of his dreadful *Name*, with like Triumph to eject them, *Luke* 10. 17. And what is more, when some that did *not adhere to him*, would try to scare and controul them by his Sacred Name, the trembling Devils fled before them, *Mark* 9. 38. And this is another work peculiar to God, which, whatsoever some Potent *Demons* can, to be sure they never will imitate. Indeed, in some particular instances, the higher Orders may command, and eject some particular inferiour Spirits, and thereby serve their own designs. But to go on ejecting all Ranks and Orders, and those where they are in the greatest numbers and

* Matth. 17. 18, 21.

and combinations, and that with terrors, consternation, and torments; is plainly to commence an open War among themselves, which, as our Saviour argued, must *needs destroy the Devil's Kingdom*, and therefore is a thing too fooliſh and abſurd, to be imagined of intelligent, ſubtle, and deſigning Spirits, *Matth.* 12. 25, 26.

Queſt. I ſee the *Miracles of Jeſus* were evidently diſtinguiſhed from the *lying wonders of Satan*, by the *very kind* of them in theſe inſtances. Pray now ſhow alſo how they were as convincingly diſcriminated, by their *intent and deſign* in all others?

Anſ. Becauſe all the Miracles of *Jeſus* were apparently wrought to exalt the honour, and ſervice of the true God; and to promote the real good of Men; and to plant Tempers, and Practices, diametrically oppoſite to the way and genius of evil Spirits, aiming to root out all thoſe Errors and Superſtitions, which they had cultivated with utmoſt care through all former Ages, to overthrow their Altars, reduce their Worſhippers, and utterly exclude them from all that Domination, which they had ſo long uſurped among Men. And 'tis certain, that a worker of Miracles, for theſe Pious, Heavenly, and Charitable purpoſes, is not acted, or directed by wicked Spirits. For if they ceaſe to be God's Enemies, and ours, they ceaſe to be Devils. If they turn Preachers of Humility, Purity, the Love of God,

and of one another, What becomes of their Apoſtaſie? If they proclaim the God and Father of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* to be the only true God, whom we are to fear and worſhip, and themſelves to be fallen Angels who are no longer to be adored in Temples, hearkened to in their ſuggeſtions, nor imitated in their ſalſhood, pride, envy, hatred of God and Men, and other practices; they turn Angels of Light, inſtead of being Powers of Darkneſs. The Devils can work no Miracles for theſe ends, except they ſhould firſt turn Saints, and change their Natures. And therefore it was a moſt authentick, and aſſuring mark, which *Jeſus* gave of the truth of his own Miracles, when he called them *the works his Father had given him to finiſh*, that is, which were not wrought for any ill ends, nor out of vanity to exalt his own Praiſe, but to ſerve the ends of God, and ſet on his *Father*'s deſires and purpoſes, *John* 5. 36.

Queſt. Indeed, in ſuch kinds, which ſeem more imitable by created powers, theſe intents and deſigns would indiſputably diſtinguiſh *his ſigns*, from all *Satanical Deluſions.*

Anſ. Yes, and ſo I might add in the laſt place, would his *manner of performance* too. For his uſual way of working wonders, was not by any Magical Rites, and Invocations, but meerly by a Word of his Mouth. *To the wind, and ſea, he ſaid, Peace,*

Peace, and it was ſtill, Mark 4. 39. *to the deaf man's Ears, Be opened*, and inſtantly *he heard*, *Mark* 7. 34. 35. *to the blind man, Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee ſee*, and without more ado *he ſaw* again, *Mark* 10. 52. *to the leper, I will, Be thou cleanſed, and his leproſie was cured*, Luke 5. 13. Which way of effecting things, by an all-commanding Word, is as plain an evidence of a Divine Power, as Creating all things was at firſt: for then God only ſaid, *Let there be light, and there was light*, Gen. 1. 3. *he* only *ſpake, and it was done, he commanded, and it ſtood faſt*, Pſalm 33. 9. Not to mention moreover, the vaſt number of his Miracles, which more aſſuredly inferred a Divine Power in him, than in any, nay in all the *Prophets* put together, who lived before him. For whereas the *Jews*, when, to exalt *Moſes* and the *Prophets*, they ambitiouſly make the moſt of their Miracles, after they have picked up all they can, compute all his only at 76. and all theirs from the beginning of the World to the deſtruction of the Temple only at 74. which both together make but 150. in above 3000 Years time: this ſingle *Jeſus*, in three Years wrought ſo many, *that were they all written, the world it ſelf would not be able to contain the Books, that ſhould be written of them*, John 21. 25. To all which I might add, laſtly, That he did not only ſhow theſe great, and numerous ſigns himſelf in Perſon; but tranſmitted the Power to Numbers to

do the same *in his Name*, and conferred this Power on *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, which are things utterly unknown among all the wonder-workers of former times.

Quest. But in this point one thing sticks still with the *Jews*, which is, that *Jesus* and his *Apostles*, in credit of their Miracles, went about to overthrow the Law of *Moses*. And may not they therefore confront all the Miracles wrought in justification of that Law, against theirs?

Ans. They might, to one that accused that Law as forged or erroneous. Which *Jesus* was so far from doing, that he all along makes *Moses* and the *Prophets* his Vouchers, telling the *Jews*, *had you believed Moses, you would have believed me, for he wrote of me*, John 5. 46. and *search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testifie of me*, verse 39.

Quest. But did not those Miracles, when they proved that Law to come from God, prove also that none should come in after-time, to abrogate and annull it?

Ans. No: on the contrary the Holy Prophets under that Law declared it should be changed, and all those things subverted, whereto it was adapted, and which were the ground and foundation of it.

Quest. To what things was the *Jewish* Law adapted?

Ans. Their *Moral* Laws, contained in the *Ten* Commandments, were adapted, not to the particular state and circumstances

of

of any place or People, but of the common humane Nature, and therefore were unchangeable. And accordingly, when our Saviour comes to meddle with them, he declares it was *not to destroy* or vacate, *but fulfil* and add what was wanting in them, *Matth.* 5. 17, 18. But their *Judicial* Laws, which prescribed the Rules of Courts and Judgments, were fitted to their external Polity, as they were a civil State in *Canaan*. And as for their *Ceremonial*, which order'd the Rules of their Religion and Worship, to omit other specialties therein, that chief part of them about *Sacrifices*, was all to be administred by *one Family*, viz. † *Aaron's line*, and was limited to *one place*, viz. the * *temple of Jerusalem*.

† Exod. 28. 1. & 1 Chron. 23. 13.

* Deut. 12. 11, 13, 14. & John 4. 20.

Quest. And did the Holy Prophets under that Law, foretel any change in that *Priesthood*, *Temple-worship*, and *Civil State*, or talk of any new settlement of things, independent on, or inconsistent with them?

Ans. Yes, *In the last days*, a known Phrase for the *days of Messiah*, *the mountain of the Lord's house*, says *Isaiah*, *shall be established in the top of the mountains, and all nations shall flow unto it*, Isaiah 2. 2. *God's Name shall be great among the Gentiles, from the rising to the setting of the sun, in every place shall incense be offered to his Name, and a pure offering*: which cannot consist with Worshipping still in one appropriate place, *viz.* the *Jewish* Temple in *Jerusalem*, Mal. 1. 11. A new Priesthood shall be erected, says the *Psal-*

mist, in the days of *Christ*, not *after the order* of *Aaron*, but *Melchisedech*, Psalm 110. 4. and then shall *God take* to himself *Priests and Levites out of other nations*, no longer confining his choice to *Aaron*, and his Sons, *Isaiah* 66. 19, 20, 21. a plain sign the *Law was to cease*, when the *Priesthood was*, which had the Ministration of it, *Heb.* 7. 12. About *Messiah*'s time, says the Prophet *Daniel*, *shall God destroy the city, and make an utter desolation*, the *Scepter too departing*, as * *Jacob* foretold, when once *Shilo was come*: and what place then for their Judicial Laws, when they were no longer to be a Nation, nor have any Established Polity, to administer, and judge by them? *He shall* also *destroy the Sanctuary*; and what then becomes of all the Sacrifices, when once the place was demolished, wherein the Law required they should all be offered? *Dan.* 9. 26, 27. In summ, they declare, as I noted before, that God would *set aside the Mosaick Covenant*, by reason of its insufficiency, and *give them a new*, and *better Covenant* in its place. And that he would make this change at that time, when a *woman should compass a Man*, which plainly notes the days of Messiah, *Jeremiah* 31. 22, 31, 32, &c.

* Gen. 49. 10.

Quest. Indeed, these are plain proofs, that the Law of *Moses* was designedly subject unto change in *Messiah*'s days. And if *Jesus* abrogates it, as they foretold he should, 'tis evident he ought not to be looked

looked upon as oppoſing the *Old Prophets*, for accompliſhing their own Predictions?

Anſ. Moſt certainly, but is therein owned and vouched by them, as he was in the event too by God himſelf, when by the *confuſion of Tribes*, and *deſtruction of the Temple* and *Commonwealth*, by *Veſpaſian*, he plainly ſet aſide thoſe Laws, by rendring them impoſſible, and leaving no more place for them. Their *Civil* or *Judicial* Laws, about *Buying* and *Selling*, *Succeſſion into Eſtates*, *Reparation of Dammages*, *Puniſhments of Offences*, and other things, are plainly now of no force, having never ſince then had any ſtanding Polity, or live-Power to put them in Execution. The Laws fixing the *Prieſthood in Aaron's line*, and directing their Miniſtration, have been evidently ſuperſeded ever ſince that Line was utterly undiſtinguiſhable, and irrecoverably unknown. The Laws and *Ceremonies* about *Sacrifices*, which were all determined to the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, have been apparently out of doors, ever ſince the Temple was brought to ruine. And thoſe many other Laws obſerved by learned Men, to be made with a *limited Obligation* to the *Land of Canaan*, are manifeſtly taken off, ſince God has irreverſibly baniſhed them from thence, and ſcattered them abroad in every Nation. So that all theſe Laws are viſibly abrogated by God himſelf, and fallen on courſe, with the loſs of their Country, and

of

of the distinction of Tribes, and with the fall of the Civil State and Temple, which were their Foundation.

Quest. But do not some places speak the perpetuity of some of those Laws, as when the * *Passover*, and the *Precept of* † *First fruits*, and several others, are called a *Statute for ever?* And how can these admit of such change?

* Exod. 12. 17.
† Lev. 23. 14.

Ans. Just as the *Priesthood* did, which was said to *minister to God for ever*, Deut. 18. 5. & 1 Chron. 15. 2. And as the *Temple*, wherein God says *he will take up his rest for ever:* which yet, we all know, for above Sixteen hundred Years has been utterly destroyed, *Psalm* 132. 14. *Perpetual* Statutes, and *unalterable*, are *two* things. Those are *perpetual*, which are made without an express limitation of time, and which must last, till the same Power repeals that enacted them. And thus some Statutes in *Moses's Law* are stiled *perpetual*, not to exclude all Power of Abrogation, but in opposition to some other Pendent Statutes, that were not to oblige till *after a certain time*, as the Law of † *driving out the Canaanites*, which was not to be of force, till they came among them. Or to some, that obliged only in *some certain state* and *condition:* as the Statute for * *going without the Camp*, which related to their State of Peregrination; and the Statutes about the † *Tabernacle*, which was to last only till God chose out a place, where they

† Exod. 23 31 & Num. 33. 52.

* Deut. 23. 12.

† Exod. 40.

they ſhould build him a *Temple*. But among them, thoſe things eſpecially were ſaid to *be for ever*, which were to *continue to the end of any thing*, or laſt out the *whole courſe of any period of time*, and till a new Revolution. Thus it is ſaid of *Samuel*, that he was brought to * *abide before the Lord for ever*, that is, all his life time; as in the form of our Law, an Eſtate is ſaid to be granted and bequeathed to a Man *for ever*, when it is given him for his life: and a *Servant* was ſaid in the † Law to be *for ever*, who was to ſerve only *till the next* * *Jubilee*, which was a time of general Releaſe, and begun a new reckoning. And thus the Law of *Moſes* did laſt *for ever*, that is, it laſted to the end of that State whereto it was adapted, continuing till *Chriſt* came, whoſe time was the beginning of a new Age, commonly known and expreſſed in the *Jewiſh* Phraſe, by the † *laſt days*, and the * *laſt time*, and the † *world to come*. Beſides, all the Typical part of that Law, being only in the Nature of an obſcure Prophecy, which was a * *School-maſter to bring us to Chriſt*, by ſhadowing out the good things to come by him; it was ſuperſeded of courſe by his fulfilling of them, as all Predictions are by their Accompliſhment and Conſummation.

* 1 Sam. 1. 22.

† Exod. 21. 6.

* Lev. 25. 40, 41.

† Mic. 4 1.

* 1 Pet 1. 20.

† Heb. 2. 5.

* Gal. 3 24.

Queſt. By this I perceive, there is no claſhing in deſigns between our *Jeſus*, and *Moſes* and the *Prophets*. And when he ſet aſide that Law, it was only as they hoped, and

and foretold he should, by consummating and fulfilling whatsoever it prefigured, and clearing up what it obscured, and supplying what it omitted, and by substituting a better Law in its place.

Ans. Very right. And therefore all the *Old Testament* Miracles do not in the least oppose, but fortifie and confirm his. So that, as he told the *Jews, if they* really *believed Moses*, that would lead them to *believe him*; but if they *rejected him*, that very *Moses, in whom they trusted, would accuse them*, John 5. 45, 46.

Quest. By what you have said, 'tis plainly evident, that the *Miracles* which *Jesus wrought*, were done *by the finger of God*: and then, that naturally follows, which he thereupon infers, therefore *no doubt the kingdom of God is come unto you*, Matth. 12. 28, 29.

But one *Divine Testimony* you mentioned besides all these, for proving *Jesus* to be the *Christ*, and that was the Testimony of *the Father*: pray make that clear?

Ans. This Testimony *Jesus* alledges in his own behalf, as an additional evidence to the former Testimony of his works. *The same works that I do, bear witness of me. And the Father* also *himself, which hath sent me, hath born witness of me*, John 5. 36, 37. & chap. 8. 17, 18.

Quest.

Queſt. But ſince we are upon Earth, and the *Father* in Heaven, and he doth not viſibly appear to converſe among Men, how did he give Teſtimony to him?

Anſ. I ſhall mention *two* ways: *Firſt*, by *audible voices, ye have not at any time heard his voice*, ſays *Jeſus* to the *Jews*, when he mentions his Father's Witneſs, *John* 5. 37. *Secondly*, By *raiſing him from the Dead*, and ſhowing him openly in *full poſſeſſion of his pretences.*

Queſt. Was God the *Father* ever heard to ſay, *Jeſus is the Chriſt*, and declare for him by *audible Voices?*

Anſ. Yes, ſeveral times. He appeared cloathed with Light and Brightneſs, the uſual viſible Symbol of his preſence, as he did of old to *Moſes at the Buſh*, and thence gave a vocal Teſtimony to *Jeſus*, in as plain and intelligible words, as before he had uſed to *Moſes*, or as we can uſe in giving Teſtimony to one another. This he did firſt at his *Baptiſm*, before *John the Baptiſt*, ſaying, *This is my beloved ſon, in whom I am well pleaſed*, Matth. 3. 17. And again at his *Tranſfiguration*, before *three* of his *Apoſtles*, *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, when *out of the bright cloud a voice came, ſaying, This is my beloved ſon, in whom I am well pleaſed; hear ye him*, Matth. 17. 1, 5. Which Voice, ſaith S. *Peter*, *from the excellent Glory of God the Father, we heard, when*

when we were with him in the Holy mount, and were eye-witneſſes of his Majeſty, 2 Pet. 1. 16, 17, 18. And the ſame he repeated again a *third* time before a Multitude, when *Andrew and Philip brought the Greeks to him.* For before them all, *Jeſus Prayed, Father, Glorifie thy Name.* And thereupon *came a voice from heaven, ſaying, I have both glorified it, and will glorifie it again,* John 12. 28. And this is a moſt ſenſible, and ſatisfactory way of God's declaring himſelf, not meerly by ſhows and reſemblances of things, which are impreſſed by Viſions and Dreams upon Mens imaginations, but by plain, proper, and ſignificant words, ſuch as he uſed in converſing with *Adam in paradiſe,* Geneſis 3. 8, 9. and with *Moſes at the buſh,* Exodus 3. 4. when aſſuming a Glorious Light, the uſual way of ſhewing himſelf particularly preſent, he ſpoke to Men out of it, in an audible Voice, as ſenſibly, and intelligibly, as a Man can talk and diſcourſe with his Friend.

Queſt. Did the *Father* alſo teſtifie *Jeſus to be the Chriſt* by *raiſing him from the Dead,* and ſhewing him openly in *full poſſeſſion of his pretences?*

Anſ. Yes, *on the third day, he roſe again,* as we profeſs in the *Creed.* And Almighty * *God,* as S. *Peter* ſaith, *raiſed him up.* And hereby he did plainly teſtifie, and vouch for him. For after the

* Act. 2. 24, 32.

Jews

Jews had done their worſt, condemning, and cruelly executing him: in raiſing him up again, God viſibly reverſed their Sentence, and undid what they had done, and juſtified him as one that deſerved not to continue under the Power of Death, but to live again. He was put to Death in the Fleſh, but *juſtified in the Spirit*, viz. by that Divine Spirit, which raiſed him from the Dead, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. He was *declared to be the Son of God with power, by the reſurrection from the dead*, Rom. 1. 4. Nay, after his Reſurrection, he ſet him in Heaven, at his own right Hand, ſurrounded with a Divine Glory, the uſual Symbol of God's Preſence and Majeſty. In which auguſt form, he ſhewed him to * *Stephen*, to prepare him for his *Martyrdom*; and to † *Saul*, at his *Converſion*; *Jeſus* appearing to them from God's right Hand, in a *Glory* that ſurpaſſed the *Brightneſs of the Sun*. And having enthroned him there, he intruſted him with the *Holy Ghoſt*, to diſpoſe of it as he pleaſed; a plain Evidence of his having *all Power in Heaven*, as well as *on Earth*, as he pretended. Which Power he viſibly manifeſted to all Men, not only by ſending down the Holy Spirit, in all variety of moſt ſtupendious Gifts, upon his own *Apoſtles*; but enabling them, by *impoſition of Hands in his Name*, to conſer the ſame upon innumerable Multitudes of his followers,

* Act. 7. 55.
† Act. 26. 13, 14, 16.

ers, as appears, from the *Acts* of the *Holy Apostles*, and from other *Scriptures*.

Quest. I will not ask you for any more Evidence in this great point, of *Jesus being the Christ*: such demonstrations, as you have insisted on, being abundantly sufficient to gain belief from every honest mind, that is careful to inquire, and willing to be informed. And as for others, who are wantonly captious, or wilfully blind and incredulous, they are not to be convinced by Reason and Arguments.

But building on this now, as most unquestionably sure, That *Jesus is the Christ*, doth not that undeniably prove the *Divine Authority of the New Testament*, which is his Word?

Ans. Most certainly it doth. For that contains only what he either spoke, or acted himself in his Life; or ordered his *Apostles* to do, and teach in his Name, after his Death. The same Proofs and Testimonies, which justifie him, do authorize it; since it only sets out to us all that Word, in declaration whereof all the Evidences urged hitherto are to gain him credit.

Quest. I am fully satisfied of the certainty, and have heard enough to convince me of the usefulness, and efficacy of *Faith in Christ*. I would desire now to hear something more of the particular points of that Faith, whereof we are to be

be thus firmly perſuaded, and whereby ſuch admirable things are to be performed.

Anſ. Thoſe, as I hinted at firſt, are ſummed up in that *ſhort Creed*, into the profeſſion whereof we are all Baptized. And that I ſhall next endeavour to diſcourſe on, and explain to you.

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THE Knowledge of GOD: OR, AN EXPLICATION OF THE Divine Attributes, AND PROVIDENCE.

The Knowledge of God: or, an Explication of the Divine Attributes, and Providence.

CHAP. I.

Of the Being, and Attributes of God.

The Contents.

The World declares there is a God. He is an eternal Spirit, on whom all things depend. Of God's Holineſs. *Several things explained, which ſeem to infringe it: as when God is ſaid to harden Mens hearts. To inflict Spiritual blindneſs, and a reprobate ſenſe. To ſend a falſe Spirit to deceive* Ahab: *and ſtrong deluſion. God oft gives Men up to the deluſion of evil Spirits. Cautions to prevent this. To give Men a Spirit of ſlumber. An account, how notwithſtanding God's irreconcileable hatred of ſin, it is ſtill ſuffered in the World. Of God's* Goodneſs. *Several falſe Notions of it. In what things it chiefly conſiſts. Of God's* Juſtice, or Righteouſneſs. *This ſhown in giving Righteous Laws. And paſſing Righteous Judgments according to them,*

without respect of Persons. His Punitive Justice cleared from misplacing punishments, in punishing one for another's sins. And from mispropertioning them, in allotting eternal punishments, to momentany sins. Some false aspersions on this just God wiped off. Of God's Presence in all places. The effect of this, Of his Faithfulness. This shown by inviolable performance of his Promises: And interpreting them without evasion, or secret reserve, according to their plain meanings. And by constant adherence to his Friends and Faithful Servants: which is no encouragement for any to return to their former sins. Of God's Wisdom. This shown in setting a just rate and estimate on all things; so that he is neither gained, nor lost by worthless services. In discerning the just power and force of all Means, and success of all Methods; which should beget the greatest Reverence for all his Ordinances. In seeing the best times, and seasons, for every purpose: so that we must never think any Deliverance too long delayed, or Affliction too fast hastened. No reason to pretend to the Love of God, without loving, and imitating these Divine Excellencies.

Question. WHat are the *Articles of Christian Faith*, or particular points, which we Christians are to believe?

Answer. They are all contained in this Creed, commonly called the *Apostles Creed*; I be-

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth. And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, *suffered under* Pontius Pilate, *was crucified, dead, and buried, he descended into Hell; the third day he rose again from the dead, he ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right Hand of God the Father Almighty, from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholick Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of Sins; the Resurrection of the Body; and the Life Everlasting.* Amen.

Quest. Doth this *Creed* contain all points of Doctrine, necessary to be believed by every Christian?

Ans. Yes, for it was given for a Confession of Faith, that should fit Men for *Baptism*, and shew any Person to be a Christian: and they had better have made no Rule, or Confession of Faith at all, than an imperfect one.

Quest. What do you make the *first* Article in this Creed?

Ans. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth.

Quest. How doth it appear that there is a God?

Ans. From this vast World, that he has made. Even as we are unquestionably assured of the Being of a Skilful Architect, where we see a stately, and well contrived House erected; or of a learned Author,

without reſpect of Perſons. His Punitive Juſtice cleared from miſplacing puniſhments, in puniſhing one for another's ſins. And from miſproportioning them, in allotting eternal puniſhments, to momentany ſins. Some falſe aſperſions on this juſt God wiped off. Of God's Preſence in all places. The effect of this. Of his Faithfulneſs. This ſhown by inviolable performance of his Promiſes: And interpreting them without evaſion, or ſecret reſerve, according to their plain meanings. And by conſtant adherence to his Friends and Faithful Servants: which is no encouragement for any to return to their former ſins. Of God's Wiſdom. This ſhown in ſetting a juſt rate and eſtimate on all things; ſo that he is neither gained, nor loſt by worthleſs ſervices. In diſcerning the juſt power and force of all Means, and ſucceſs of all Methods; which ſhould beget the greateſt Reverence for all his Ordinances. In ſeeing the beſt times, and ſeaſons, for every purpoſe: ſo that we muſt never think any Deliverance too long delayed, or Affliction too faſt haſtened. No reaſon to pretend to the Love of God, without loving, and imitating theſe Divine Excellencies.

Queſtion. WHat are the *Articles of Chriſtian Faith*, or particular points, which we Chriſtians are to believe?

Anſwer. They are all contained in this *Creed*, commonly called the *Apoſtles Creed*; I be-

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth. And in Jeſus Chriſt, his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, born of the Virgin Mary, *ſuffered under* Pontius Pilate, *was crucified, dead, and buried, he deſcended into Hell; the third day he roſe again from the dead, he aſcended into Heaven, and ſitteth at the right Hand of God the Father Almighty, from thence he ſhall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghoſt; the Holy Catholick Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveneſs of Sins; the Reſurrection of the Body; and the Life Everlaſting.* Amen.

Queſt. Doth this *Creed* contain all points of Doctrine, neceſſary to be believed by every Chriſtian?

Anſ. Yes, for it was given for a Confeſſion of Faith, that ſhould fit Men for *Baptiſm*, and ſhew any Perſon to be a Chriſtian: and they had better have made no Rule, or Confeſſion of Faith at all, than an imperfect one.

Queſt. What do you make the *firſt* Article in this Creed?

Anſ. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth.

Queſt. How doth it appear that there is a God?

Anſ. From this vaſt World, that he has made. Even as we are unqueſtionably aſſured of the Being of a Skilful Architect, where we ſee a ſtately, and well contrived Houſe erected; or of a learned Author,

from an excellent, and well-penned Book; or of an Ingenious Artificer, from a Watch of exact, and various Movements, or other elaborate, and curious piece of Workmanſhip. And this ſhows us, not only that there is a God, on whom we, and all this created World depend: but alſo that he is moſt Wiſe, Powerful, and Good; becauſe the greateſt Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, are every where apparent in the contrivance, and formation of it. For *the inviſible things of God, even his eternal Power and Godhead, are clearly ſeen from the Creation of the World, being underſtood by the things that are made*, as S. *Paul* ſays, *Rom.* 1. 20.

Queſt. Indeed, nothing in reaſon ſeems more obvious, than that all this World muſt have an Architect; and that we, and all the things about us, which every where ſpring up and periſh, could never make our ſelves; and that things of ſuch admirable Order, Harmony, and Uſefulneſs, could not any one, and much leſs all of them, be put together by blind and uncontriving chance. And therefore, methinks, this proof of *God's Being*, from the *voice of his Works*, muſt needs convince all his reaſonable Creatures?

Anſ. Yes, and ever ſince the World began, ſo it has. *There is neither ſpeech nor language, where their voice is not heard: their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world*, Pſal. 19. 3, 4.

On

On this, or other Arguments, all People, in every Age, and Nation, believed, and acknowledged that there is a God, and delivered down that Belief to thoſe who followed them. And therefore no Perſon can ever oppoſe this, and pretend to reaſon, ſince thereby, he ſets up himſelf againſt all People of every place and time, and againſt what paſſed for the plaineſt, and moſt unconteſtable Principle of humane reaſon, ever ſince there was any ſuch thing. So that if therein he has reaſon, he has it to himſelf alone, and all the preſent World beſides, yea, and all Ages too that went before him, had none.

Queſt. What things are we to know, and believe concerning God?

Anſ. Firſt, His *God-head, and Divine Attributes. Secondly, His Providence.*

Queſt. There is nothing in all Religion more neceſſary, or uſeful for us, than to have a right apprehenſion of Almighty God. Is he like any thing, which we behold with our Eyes, or feel with our Hands, or diſcern by any Bodily Senſes?

Anſ. No; in *Scripture*, indeed, he is ſaid to have *Ears*, and *Eyes*, and *Hands*, and *Feet*. But therein, as the *Jewiſh Rabbins* ſay, *the Law ſpeaks of God with the Tongue of the Children of Men.* And we are to underſtand, not that he has any ſuch parts, but only that he has as full perceptions, and performs the ſame things, as we do by them. The inviſible God, *whom no man hath ſeen,*

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or can see, 1 Tim. 6. 16. *is a Spirit*, says our Saviour, *John* 4. 24. And this must teach us in all our Services, which we pay to him, never to think of putting him off with outward Shows, Gifts, and Ceremonies; but to be inwardly affected in all we do, or say, and always to offer him our Hearts, and Spirits: For *he being a Spirit, must be worshipped*, as *Christ* said, *in Spirit and in truth*, John 4. 24. And moreover, never to make any Bodily Images, and representations of him; or fancy to give him Worship, and Honour by them: since a pure unbodied Spirit, is not represented, but * belyed; not honoured, but debased by any such thing. *Ye saw † no manner of similitude of God*, when he came and *spake to you*, said *Moses* to the *Jews*, *therefore take good heed, lest ye corrupt your selves in making any of him*, Deut. 4. 15, 16. And *thou shalt not make to thee any likeness, of any thing*, either *in Heaven, or Earth, to bow down to them*, said the *Law*, Exod. 20. 4, 5.

* Rom. 1. 23, 25. Is. 44. 20.
† Is. 40. 18.

Quest. But although we cannot see him with our Eyes, yet we may apprehend several things of him in our minds. And one, you say, is his *God-head*: what mean you by that?

Ans. His *Sovereignty*, or being the Supreme Being, that depends on none, and that all other things depend upon. Particularly Men, who were at first made by him, and still absolutely depend on him. *In him we live, move, and have our being*, Act. 17. 28.

Quest.

Queſt. If he depends on none, he muſt be an eternal Being, which never had beginning?

Anſ. Yes, becauſe there was nothing before him, to give beginning to him. So that if he had not been from all Eternity, he could never have been at all.

Queſt. And if all things elſe, but eſpecially all Men, do abſolutely depend on him, that will make all careful to ſerve and pleaſe him, and found Religion?

Anſ. Undoubtedly ſo it ſhould. And where it is not only believed, but ſeriouſly laid to heart, ſo it will.

Queſt. What are the *Divine Attributes*, or Properties of God, which will ſhow us how he ſtands affected, and what will pleaſe him?

Anſ. He is all *Holineſs*, *Goodneſs*, *Juſtice*, *Faithfulneſs*, *Wiſdom*, *Almighty*, *every where preſent*, and *can never change*.

Queſt. What is meant by God's *Natural Purity* and *Holineſs*.

Anſ. His abſolute exemption from all ſin in himſelf, and his perfect averſation, and immutable hatred of it in all others. He can *take no pleaſure in wickedneſs*, *he hates all workers of iniquity*, and therefore *evil ſhall not dwell with him*, Pſal. 5. 4, 5.

Queſt. If this be his unalterable Nature, he can never be reconciled to Mens ſins, nor take delight in any Man, whilſt he goes on to be a ſinner?

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Queſt. Since God's Holineſs beſpeaks ſuch abſolute abhorrence of all vice and wickedneſs, I ſee it implies ſomething more, than barely his affectation of External Decency, or his hatred to be treated rudely and unmannerly.

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† Pſal. 89. 18. Iſa. 6. 3. Habak. 1. 12.

ſide of God's Holineſs. And therefore no Man muſt ever think to content him, by Ceremonious Formalities, as being extreme nice and ſcrupulouſly careful about the Place, the Garb, the Poſture, or other decent Dreſs, or circumſtance of his Worſhip and Service; except at the ſame time he ſhun all ſin and wickedneſs, which affront him moſt of all, and bear the directeſt oppoſition to his Holineſs. As this without the other, is Spiritual ill Breeding, and Clowniſh Ruſticity: ſo is the other without it, mere Form and Complement, and an empty unprofitable Ceremony.

Queſt. If this Holy God is ſo irreconcileably ſet againſt ſin, ſure he can never be the Author of it?

Anſ. No; *let no Man ſay when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither doth he tempt* or incite *any man* to it, *James* 1. 13. The *Devil* tempts us, who is called *the Tempter* in the *Scriptures*, Matth. 4. 3. And *wicked men*, who are his Inſtruments. And *our own Luſts* moſt of all, when they *draw us away*, and *intice us to evil*, as S. *James* ſays, *James* 1. 14. But as for the moſt Holy God, the concern he has about our ſins, is in no wiſe to decree, or help them on, but only to forbid, and puniſh them. *He has no pleaſure in wickedneſs*, or, as the * *Septuagint* tranſlate it, *he doth not will it*, Pſal. 5. 4.

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Anſ. Yes, but God did theſe, not by way of poſitive influence and efficiency, as a concurrent cauſe; but only by withdrawing his Grace, and leaving Men to be hardned by their own Luſts, and by evil Spirits. And thus of *Pharaoh* 'tis ſaid, that *he hardned his own heart*, Exod. 8. 15, 32. and of *David*, that *Satan moved him to number the people*, 1 Chron. 21. 1.

Queſt. But doth not his withdrawing of his Grace, ſhow a willingneſs to have ſin take place, and that although he is loth to do it himſelf, yet he is free, Men ſhould be hardned by others?

Anſ. No; 'tis only when he is put to it as a Wiſe, and upright Judge, in way of Juſtice. For he never withdraws his Grace, and thereby leaves Men to their own Luſts, and malignant Spirits, till they have firſt made a forfeiture of it, by reiterated repulſes and affronts, or ſome high provocations. Thus in the Story of *Pharaoh* in *Exodus*, (except what is ſaid, *Chap.* 7. 13. *he hardned Pharaoh's heart*, which, as the * Learned note, may as well be rendred *Pharaoh's heart was hardned*, as the ſame word is rendred *verſe* 22. God is not ſaid thus *to harden Pharaoh's heart*, and *ſend all his*

* Dr. *Hammond's Annot.* on Rom. 9. 18.

his plagues upon his heart, chap. 9. 12, 14. till *Pharaoh* had ſeveral times wickedly diſobeyed, and wilfully *hardned his own heart*, chap. 8. 15, 32. And when 'tis ſaid, that *God moveth David to number the people*, 'tis added, that their ſins had provoked him to *Anger*, which made him give him up to it, 2 *Sam.* 24. 1. God's Grace and Holy Spirit, is always repulſed and driven away, before he recals it from Men, and thereby gives them up to an evil Luſt, or an infernal Spirit, to harden, and work in them.

Queſt. What ſay you when God threatens Men with *Spiritual Blindneſs*, that they ſhall *look on without ſeeing*, and *hear without underſtanding*, Iſaiah 6. 9. Which Judgment S. *Paul* teſtifies, was *befallen the unbelieving Jews*, Rom. 11. 7, 25. As our *Lord* himſelf alſo noted, *Matth.* 13. 14, 15.

Anſ. Not that he inſtils into them any errors, or puſhes and precipitates them on to any wicked act, without opening their Eyes. But only that he leaves them to their own violent and blind prejudices, which will neither let them hear, nor ſee any thing, that makes againſt them: and withdraws clear means of knowledge, after they have long ſlighted, and abuſed them; as our Saviour did from the *blinded Jews*, *therefore*, as he ſays, *ſpeaking to them in Parables*, *becauſe ſeeing they ſaw not*, *and hearing they heard not*, that is, they would not

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Anſ. No; 'tis only when he is put to it as a Wiſe, and upright Judge, in way of Juſtice. For he never withdraws his Grace, and thereby leaves Men to their own Luſts, and malignant Spirits, till they have firſt made a forfeiture of it, by reiterated repulſes and affronts, or ſome high provocations. Thus in the Story of *Pharaoh* in *Exodus*, (except what is ſaid, *Chap.* 7. 13. *he hardned Pharaoh's heart*, which, as the * Learned note, may as well be rendred *Pharaoh's heart was hardned*, as the ſame word is rendred *verſe* 22. God is not ſaid thus *to harden Pharaoh's heart*, and *ſend all his*

* Dr. *Hammond's Annot.* on Rom. 9. 18.

his plagues upon his heart, chap. 9. 12, 14. till *Pharaoh* had ſeveral times wickedly diſobeyed, and wilfully *hardned his own heart*, chap. 8. 15, 32. And when 'tis ſaid, that *God moved David to number the people*, 'tis added, that their ſins had provoked him to *Anger*, which made him give him up to it, 2 *Sam.* 24. 1. God's Grace and Holy Spirit. is always repulſed and driven away, before he recals it from Men, and thereby gives them up to an evil Luſt, or an infernal Spirit, to harden, and work in them.

Queſt. What ſay you when God threatens Men with *Spiritual Blindneſs*, that they ſhall *look on without ſeeing*, and *hear without underſtanding*, Iſaiah 6. 9. Which Judgment S. *Paul* teſtifies, was *befallen the unbelieving Jews*, Rom. 11. 7, 25. As our *Lord* himſelf alſo noted, *Matth.* 13. 14, 15.

Anſ. Not that he inſtils into them any errors, or puſhes and precipitates them on to any wicked act, without opening their Eyes. But only that he leaves them to their own violent and blind prejudices, which will neither let them hear, nor ſee any thing, that makes againſt them: and withdraws clear means of knowledge, after they have long ſlighted, and abuſed them; as our Saviour did from the *blinded Jews*, *therefore*, as he ſays, *ſpeaking to them in Parables*, *becauſe ſeeing they ſaw not*, *and hearing they heard not*, that is, they would not

not be made to ſee, and hear, by plain Speeches, *Matth.* 13. 13. This infliction of Spiritual blindneſs, S. *Paul*, in the caſe of the *Romans*, calls *giving up to a reprobate ſenſe*, Rom. 1. 28. Whereto God then gave them up, when, they of themſelves having already gone far in wickedneſs contracting it, he juſtly left them to it. *Whilſt they knew God*, they gave him no *due glory* and *acknowledgment*; and thereupon *he gave them over to a reprobate mind*, verſe 21, 28. Their reprobate ſenſe, *verſe* 28. was the woful conſequent of their own *foul luſts*, and *precontracted fooliſhneſs*, noted *verſe* 21, 23, 25, 26. God did not leave them, till they had firſt, by falſe worſhip and filthy practices, not only deſerted, but driven him, and his enlightening Spirit, away from them.

Queſt. But what ſay you to *Ahab's* caſe, did not God himſelf deceive him?

Anſ. No; but only left him to be deceived by a wicked Spirit; and that not till *Ahab had ſold himſelf to work wickedneſs*, and thereby moſt juſtly deſerved to be deſerted by him. The wicked Spirits, though they have will enough to hurt us, yet are held in Chains and Fetters, and are not let looſe, or in power to work their wills, till they have God's Licence. And therefore when the good Angels, from their ſeveral earthly charges, return back to God to make their reports, ſome wicked ones, as 'tis repreſented in the Story of *Job*, ſtill croud

croud in among them, to gain Commiſſions, either for trial or puniſhment, and ſee who will be delivered into their hands. Thus *Satan* did, when he obtained power againſt *Job*, for a *trial of his patience*, Job 1. 6. And thus on another ſet day, when God publickly decreed the *fall of Ahab*, an evil Spirit preſents himſelf, and voluntarily offers to *be a lying Spirit in the mouth of all his Prophets*, to encourage him to his *fall at Ramoth Gilead*, in deſerved puniſhment of his wickedneſs. And God not only foretels, that *Ahab* would hear him; but bids him go, and do ſo, as * *Chriſt bid Judas* when he *went out to betray him*, (as alſo the † *Devils*, when *they entred into the herd of ſwine*,) not thereby commanding and authorizing his Practice, but only taking off his reſtraint, and letting him looſe to his own wicked purpoſes, by way of permiſſion and ſufferance. 1 *King* 22. 19, 20, 21, 22.

* Joh. 13. 27.
† Matth 8. 32.

Queſt. And is that S. *Paul's* meaning, when under the *great myſtery of iniquity*, or *Man of ſin*, he ſays, *God ſhall ſend men, who loved not the truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs, ſtrong delusion*, 2 Theſſ. 2. 11.

Anſ. Yes, that deluſion was to be, by giving evil Spirits Licence to delude them. It ſhall *come with all acceivableneſs of power, and ſigns, and lying wonders, after the working of Satan*, verſe 9, 10. So that God's ſending ſtrong deluſion in thoſe days, is letting *Satan* looſe, and permitting him to give plauſible proofs, and ſhows, to ſeduce

Men. Which, with thoſe that loved unrighteouſneſs, and had *no love for the truth*, but would be glad of any pretence to embrace a pleaſing error inſtead of it, would be like enough to prevail.

Queſt. Doth God often give Men up thus to evil Spirits, to delude them?

Anſ. Yes, evil Spirits have a general influence, in producing the errors, as well as the ſins and tranſgreſſions, of all Men. But they have often a more eſpecial Licence, and extraordinary power of deluſion, in degree ſometimes greater, and ſometimes leſs, according as any Perſons, or Places, through their own wickedneſs, their pride, and wantonneſs, are left more or leſs to themſelves, and thrown out of God's protection. Thus *the darkneſs of the* Heathen *World* or * *Age*, S. *Paul* aſcribes *to the ſpiritual wickedneſſes in high* or † *heavenly places*, or to the * *wicked Spirits* in the Air called Heaven in the *Jewiſh* Books, who were *the Rulers* of it, *Eph.* 6. 12. And in account of the *deluded nations*, we are told, that *the old Serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, had deceived them*, Rev. 20. 2, 3, 8. And the general Apoſtaſie and Deluſion, by *the Man of ſin*, is aſcribed by the *Apoſtle*, as I noted, *to the working of Satan*, 2 Theſſ. 2. 9, 10, 11. And on the riſing of any *notable Heretick*, and *perverters of the truth*, the *crafty* and *malignant*

* Αἰῶνος.

† Ἐπουρανίοις.

* Πνεύματα τῆς πονηρίας: or as the *Syriack* Verſion reads it, πνεύματα.

nant Devil is uſually ſaid to *ſtir*, and *rage*, in the *Eccleſiaſtical* Language. The great deceits and deluſions of the World, are not owing only to the darkneſs of Mens own minds, and hearts; but to the malignant fraud of wicked Spirits, who by themſelves, and their inſtruments, miſerably blind and miſlead ſuch, as are forſaken of God, and delivered into their hands. And therefore it need not ſeem ſtrange to us, if we ſee Men abuſed into ſuch groſs abſurdities, as are againſt the plaineſt Scriptures, Reaſon, and common Senſe. Nay, though they be as confident of them, as if they received them by *immediate inſpiration*, and a *voice from Heaven*; and think they have as ſure *Revelations*, for their *ſenſleſs*, and *abſurd dreams*, as ever the *bleſſed Apoſtles*, and *Evangeliſts* had, for the *Holy Scriptures*. For though ſeveral of theſe ſeem too groſs, for the natural folly of Men; yet are they not for the malignity of a deluſive Dæmon. When he has gained a Licence to beſot, and abuſe Mens minds, we need not ſtand aſtoniſhed at the moſt extravagantly ſenſleſs, or ridiculous Opinions.

Queſt. If this is one method of God's Juſtice, to give up thoſe, who abuſe the Light, and the means thereof, to *Satan's deluſion*; muſt not this make us all exceeding careful, with Humility, and Reverence, to keep in his ways and appointments, that ſo we may abide under his Protection?

Anſ. Moſt certainly. And therefore by all means we muſt have a care, not to ſet our ſelves above Ordinances, to vilifie Prayers or Preaching, to deſpiſe Sacraments, to diſparage the Sacred Scriptures, to contemn ſuperciliouſly and outbrave our Miniſters, making our ſelves wiſer than our Teachers, to caſt off the Government of our Lawful Paſtors, or break the Unity of the Church, or ſuch things. For this is breaking all God's Bounds, and diſcarding his Methods, appointed to keep us all ſtable, in the knowledge, and practice of the Truth. And if we thus leave him, and wantonly leap out of all his ways, we have juſt cauſe to fear, leſt he leave us: and then we are ready to become a prey to evil Spirits, who, as they get leave in more or leſs degrees, will carry us away with their deluſions.

Queſt. You think then, that there is leſs danger of theſe deluſions, whilſt Men keep humbly, and awfully, in the Unity and Communion of *Chriſt*'s Church, than when they depart from it?

Anſ. Yes, by breaking out thence, they are got into a place more inſecure, and more full of danger. As out lying Deer, no more under the Eye and Care of the Keeper, are ready to become a prey to every Hunter. Or, as Sheep without the Fold, whilſt they ſtraggle from the Flock, and out of the compaſs of that ſpecial Providence which protects it, are in danger by

by every hurtful Beaſt to be made a prey, and picked up. Or, as near an Enemies Quarters, they who will run abroad without the Camp, are in danger of being ſeized, or ſlain by Adverſaries: ſo are Men without the Church, by evil Spirits. For they are more at liberty, and let looſe in the World, though chain'd and fetter'd in the *Church*; and if they find any leap'd out thence, are more likely to ſeize them, as ſtraves in their own Dominions.

Queſt. Indeed, that which reſtrains their malice, is the Protection of God, which is called *the Hedge*, that fenced off *Satan from Job*, Job 1. 10. And ſince all have not an equal ſhare in the Guardianſhip of Almighty God, and of his good Angels, 'tis obvious to infer, that theſe impure Spirits have more power in ſome Places, and over ſome Perſons, than over others.

Anſ. Yes, and this the *Daemon* in * *Tertullian* urged for himſelf, who being *charged by ſome*, that in thoſe *days of Miracles* came to eject him, and rebuked for *daring to attempt, and poſſeſs a Chriſtian Woman*, who was liſted under *Chriſt*'s Protection; *conſtantly pleaded, his ſeiſure was moſt juſt, becauſe he found her in his own Precincts*, viz. at the lewd, bloody, and ungodly ſhows, in the *Heathen Theatres*. This Power of *evil Spirits*, is greateſt in the unhallowed World; as the *Scripture* ſufficiently intimates, when *Satan* is called by our *Lord*, *the Prince of this world*, John 12. 31. and *chap.* 14. 30. and

* *De Spectac.* c. 26.

16. 11. and by S. *Paul, the God of this world,* 2 Cor. 4. 3. and when the *Apoſtle* aſcribes *the darkneſs of the Heathen world,* to *wicked ſpirits,* who had *the rule* and Empire of it, *Eph.* 6. 12. and *wrought in thoſe that were diſ-*
* Τοῖς τῆς ἀπειθείας. *obedient,* or the * *unperſuadable* part of Mankind, *Eph.* 2. 2. So that they are able to do moſt, before Men are entred into the *Covenant,* and *Church of God:* as from the danger *Moſes* was in, before he had *Circumciſed his Son,* the *Jewiſh Doctors* note the Power of a *deſtroying Angel* on ſuch, as have not received the initiatory Rite of *Circumciſion*;
† Dr. Lightfoot's *Hor. Heb.* in Joh. 12. 31. anſwerable whereto is that *old* † *tradition* among them, that *God exempted their Nation from the Power of the Angel of death, to which he ſubjected the reſt of the World, when he choſe them for his own People, and gave them the Law.* Or when, being once enter'd, they either burſt out of it themſelves, or by juſt excommunication, which, as our
* Matth. 18. 17. *Lord* * ſays, brings Men back into the ſtate *of the Heathen,* are caſt out into the World again. For then, the Devils obtain more Power over them: as S. *Paul* notes, ſaying of thoſe that grow turbulent in the Church, and *oppoſe themſelves,* that they are *taken captive by him,* 2 Tim. 2. 25, 26. and calling *excommunication,* a *delivering over unto Satan,* as it throws them out into his Territory, and within the verge of his Dominion, 1 *Cor.* 5. 5. & 1 *Tim.* 1. 20. Yea, probably, their attempts are more greedy, and violent upon thoſe, who for a while were reſcued

reſcued out of their hands, than on others, who were held always under them. And accordingly, in the *Parable of the unclean Spirit* we are told, that if, being *once driven out of a man*, he find him *empty*, and naked of Guards, and ſo fit to be made a prey again; *he takes with him ſeven Spirits worſe than himſelf*, when he ſeeks to enter into him the ſecond time, *Matth.* 12. 43, 44, 45. & 2 *Pet.* 2. 20.

Queſt. Would you note any thing elſe, that is like to provoke God to abandon, and give us up to theſe deluding Spirits?

Anſ. Yes, to omit others, buying and ſelling of the Truth, or acting for Gain, againſt God, and a good Conſcience. When Men forſake God, or a good way or thing, not out of ſincere convictions, but ſecular intereſts, and for worldly gain: then doth the *Devil* enter, and take poſſeſſion of them. For his great way is to open the Door by a golden Key, and by the offers of gain to get admiſſion. And thus he *enter'd into Judas*, taking poſſeſſion of him by *thirty pieces of ſilver*, which he preferred before *his Maſter*, Luk. 22. 3, 4, 5. And into *Ananias*, getting him into his Power, and *filling his heart*, by a deſire of *keeping the price of his land* to himſelf, *Act.* 5. 3. When Men once put themſelves into Satan's hands, by *putting away a good conſcience*, and profeſſing, or acting againſt convictions; they are in the ready way,

as S. *Paul* says, to *make shipwrack of the* right *Faith*, and fall under a delusion of their understandings, 2 *Tim.* 1. 19.

Quest. But doth not God himself do more than suffer, and give way to sin, by leaving them to their own Lusts, or to Satan, as you say, to push them on, when he talks of *giving men a spirit of slumber*, Rom. 11. 8, 10. & Isaiah 6. 10. Is not that something positive of his inflicting?

Ans. 'Tis like it is a sending a sluggishness of thought, or a dulness and drowsiness of apprehension on them. Not such, as makes them quite unable to apprehend; but only, like a drowsie Man, more listless, heavy, and slow in it. 'Tis *eyes, wherewith they should not see; and ears, wherewith they should not hear*; that is, such wherewith they would not, because they could not do it easily, *Rom.* 11. 8. Such abatement of intellectual perspicacity, and power, God sometimes threatens to obdurate sinners, saying, *he will smite them with madness, or blindness*, or *astonishment*, and stupidity *of heart*, Deut. 28. 28. And this is very just, thus to impair the perfection of our minds, as well as the health and strength of our Bodies, in punishment of our sins. For both these, being his gratuitous and undeserved gifts, are revertible in what measure he pleases. And he never withdraws them in his wrath from contumacious sinners, but on forfeiture and high provocations, when they have winked long against the Light,

Light and would not ſee with quick and clear ſenſes. It is all in way of Juſtice, and Judicial Proceſs; ſo that there is nothing, but what ſhows a Holy, a Juſt, and Good God too, in all this.

Queſt. But if God ſo irreconcileably hates ſin, why doth he not employ his Power to keep it out? Were it not eaſie for an Almighty God, to prevent ſin in the World, if he would?

Anſ. It is not fit he ſhould make it impoſſible, by putting it out of our power to chuſe it. And as for ſuch ways, as infer no force upon our wills, but conſiſt with our free and rewardable avoidance of ſin, he has not been wanting in them, which is all that is to be expected on his part.

Queſt. Why, to eaſe both himſelf, and us, of the evil of ſin, might not God make it impoſſible, and put it out of our power to chuſe it?

Anſ. Becauſe that is inconſiſtent with our Natures, who, having Fleſh as well as Spirit, muſt needs be free to Evil, as well as Good. It would leave nothing in us to be commended, or rewarded, when we do abſtain from it; there being no thanks due to any Man, for omitting what he was utterly incapable to act. To make ſin impoſſible, is to offer violence to our free and reaſonable Natures, and to ſet aſide all Laws, all Cenſure, and reward of Actions. Which no reaſon will expect a Holy God

God ſhould do, who looks not only at his own Power and Holineſs, but at the diſplaying of his Governing-Juſtice too, and the Freedom and Liberty of his Creatures, and will take ſuch ways to keep out ſin, as beſt comport with all theſe. So that an utter incapacity for it, is no way of hindring us free and rewardable Creatures, who are not to be irreſiſtably forced and compelled, but drawn and perſuaded.

Queſt. And has God done all, that can reaſonably be expected that way, to prevent ſin?

Anſ. Yes, he has given his own Son to die a cruel Death, thereby to purchaſe Mercy for all that truly repent of their ſins; he has plainly ſhowed, and forbid all ſin, that no Perſon need be ignorant of it; he has threatned it with the moſt inſupportable puniſhments, that all may be afraid to come near it; he offers the moſt incomparable rewards, to all that will overcome it; and promiſes the aid of an unconquerable Spirit and Grace, to enable all, who will ſtrive as they ought, to prevail againſt it. In ſumm, having ſtupendiouſly brought about, by the meritorious Death of his own Son, that Mercy ſhould be offered to all Men to pardon, and Grace to extirpate and aboliſh ſin: he has left nothing wanting, but their own wills, to perfect the conqueſt of it. And he has done all that for them, and ſet all thoſe things

things before them, which ſhould, not force their wills, indeed, but bend and perſuade them to reſolve upon ſuch conqueſt. And that is all, which ought to be done with free Creatures, whoſe wills are not to be forced, but won and perſuaded, towards its excluſion. So that if after all, ſin be in the World, God's Holineſs, and, I may add, his Goodneſs too, are not to be charged, as if they had not abundantly done their part: but only the obſtinacy of Mens own perverſe wills, which are not to be forced, and will not be diſſuaded from it, by all that can be fitly and reaſonably offered to them. And therefore it may ſtill be moſt juſtly ſaid of God, as the *Scripture* doth, *What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?* Iſaiah 5. 4. *The Lord is not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance,* 2 Pet. 3. 9. *As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but* had rather *that the wicked* man would *turn from his way, and live,* Ezek. 33. 11.

Queſt. Another of *God's Attributes* you mentioned, is his *Goodneſs.* Is *God's Goodneſs* an *undiſtinguiſhing Indulgence,* that lights promiſcuouſly on all Perſons?

Anſ. No, 'tis a Wiſe and Holy Goodneſs, that reſpects qualifications. 'Tis the Goodneſs of a juſt God, not of a fond Man, and ſo is prone to all tenderneſs, that is conſiſtent with Wiſe and Holy Ends,

Ends, and Governing Juſtice. But tenderneſs and indulgence to ill things, and for ill purpoſes and effects, is not goodneſs, but dotage.

Queſt. So that God's Goodneſs doth not beſpeak ſuch tenderneſs, as relents at the very ſight of all miſerable objects?

Anſ. No, when Love and Kindneſs have been finally abuſed by them, affronted Goodneſs gives way to inflamed Juſtice, and can ſee Men ſmart and ſuffer, without being grieved for them.

Queſt. Then we muſt not fancy God's Mercy is ſuch an effeminate ſoftneſs, and fond pity, as ſtarts at the thoughts of any ſeverity, though moſt wholeſome and neceſſary?

Anſ. No, it is Mercy to the Penitent, and Pitiable; but can well bear to ſee tormenting Cures wrought, on diſeaſed, and ſtraying offenders; or Vengeance executed, on obdurate Criminals.

Queſt. Neither is his Goodneſs ſuch eaſineſs, as will be won or wearied out, purely by the confidence in requeſts, and meer importunity of obdurate ſinners?

Anſ. No, this good and eaſie God can be inflexible to any impious, or unreaſonable requeſt. And if they have been deaf to him in his time of calling, he will ſhew himſelf Juſt as well as Good, and requite them in their own kind, and be deaf to them in theirs, yea, when the extremity of their diſtreſs makes them cry to him with utmoſt

utmoſt importunity, and loudneſs. *When their fear comes*, ſays he, *as deſolation* to lay all waſte, *and deſtruction as a whirlwind* to ſweep all before it: *then*, though *they call, and ſeek me early, will I*, inſtead of relenting, *laugh, and mock at their calamity*, Prov. 1. 26, 27, &c.

Queſt. But when this Goodneſs puts ſuch difference between Objects, is it, as ſome fancy, a blind and partial benevolence, that fixes by chance, or humour, on ſome; and when once it is fixed, heaps all favours, and ſees no faults in them?

Anſ. No, by no means. God's Goodneſs is not guided, as fond Man's often is, by blind fancy, but always by higheſt diſcretion. He is infinite in Goodneſs, but yet ſo, as at the ſame time, to be equal in Juſtice, and Wiſdom too. So that he will do good to all, that have not incapacitated themſelves by their own fault, but to none againſt juſt, and wiſe reaſon.

Queſt. By this it ſeems, this good God has not more love of any Perſons, as they are his Creatures, or Favorites, than as they are endowed with certain qualifications. And that his hatred is ſtronger againſt ſin, than his Love is for any Favorite, or created Being?

Anſ. Yes, he never loves an evil work, out of favour to the workers; but, as the *Scripture* often tells us, he hates the workers, for the ſake of their evil works. So that no Perſons muſt ever fancy they are ſuch

* Pſal. 5. 5. Prov. 21. 27. & chap. 28. 9.

ſuch Favorites of God, that he will tolerate them in any wickedneſs. Or that, having once fixed his Love upon them, or made Decrees in their favour, he will not ſee ſin in them, nor impute it to them, nor hate them for ſuch things, as are moſt hateful to him in others.

Queſt. If it is none of theſe things, what is it we are to underſtand by God's Goodneſs?

Anſ. His perfect delight in doing good. Which I ſhall note eſpecially in *two* things, *viz.* his forwardneſs in rewarding good Services, and his great Patience and Eaſineſs in paſſing over offences.

Queſt. Is he mindful of his Servants, and careful to reward all their good Services?

Anſ. Yes, and that he would have all Men undoubtedly, to think by him, that ſo they may be encouraged to ſerve him. For *he that cometh to God, muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of thoſe, that diligently ſeek him*, Heb. 11. 6.

Queſt. Is he alſo Patient and Merciful upon their Offences, as well as Bountiful upon their good Services?

Anſ. Yes, when they repent, and turn from them. For he proclaims himſelf *long-ſuffering, keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin*, Exod. 34. 6, 7. He ſhows wonderful Patience, in bearing with the ſins of Men; and Mercy in pardoning, when they truly repent of them.

Queſt.

Queſt. And is not this Mercy ſome incouragement to thoſe, who go on in their ſins?

Anſ. No, becauſe, as I ſaid, he will have Mercy on thoſe only, who repent of them. His *long-ſuffering* with ſinners, is only to give them time, and *lead them to repentance*, Rom. 2. 4. And his forgiving them, is only when they do repent. For even there, where he proclaims his Mercy, he declares *he will by no means clear the guilty*, Exod. 34. 7. If we are impenitent to the laſt, there is no expectation of Mercy to forgive, but of Juſtice to puniſh us.

Queſt. You ſay God ſhows this Goodneſs, in bountifully rewarding good Services. Doth he not alſo ſhow the ſame, in eſtimating what Services are good, and fit to be rewarded by him?

Anſ. Yes, as far as is conſiſtent with truth, and reaſon. He is by no means captious, or exceptious, like one that ſtudied to find faults, and make the worſt of our performances. Nor ſtiff, and rigid in ſtanding upon the extremities of things, but is ready to make all fair abatements, and allowances, which are reaſonably and juſtly pleadable in our caſe, as I ſhall have occaſion to obſerve afterwards.

Queſt. What mean you by God's *Juſtice*, or *Righteouſneſs*?

Anſ. His doing Right and Equity, both *firſt*, in giving Righteous Laws; and *ſecondly*, in paſſing Righteous Judgments according

according to them, without reſpect of Perſons.

Queſt. Is God Righteous as a Law-giver, in impoſing only juſt and Righteous Laws?

Anſ. Yes, The Gods of the *Gentiles*, indeed, which S. *Paul** ſays were *Devils*, injoyned their Worſhippers, the moſt ſinful, foul, and cruel things. They ſerved *Bacchus* in the Idol-Feaſts called the *Bacchanals*, and other of their Deities, with Revellings, and Drunkenneſs, and Profligate Uncleanneſs: and ſo S. *Peter* ſays, whilſt they *wrought the will of the Gentiles*, together with their *abominable Idolatries*, they *walked in laſciviouſneſs, exceſs of wine, revellings*, 1 Pet. 4. 3. as the *Iſraelites*, *joyning themſelves to the Idol Baal Peor*, *committed whoredoms*, Num. 25. 1 2, 3. They ſerved *Moloch*, that is, *Saturn*, by moſt horrible and unnatural cruelties, dropping their own Children into the Fire through the Hands of his Statue, and ſo burning them alive to him; which the Scripture calls *making them paſs through the fire to Moloch*, as a *burnt-offering*, Lev. 18. 21. & Jer. 19. 5. But the True God is moſt utterly oppoſite to all ſuch impoſitions. He commands nothing, but what is pure, and virtuous, and for our own good and advantage; what is honorable, and perfective of our Natures; nay, what is worthy, not only of Men, but of Angels, and, when he would ſubmit to any Laws, as he did when in *Chriſt* he became Man, of God himſelf.

* 1 Cor. 10. 20.

Queſt.

Queſt. This ſhews the excellency of his Laws. But what ſay you to the equity of them? Are they not rigorous and over-burdenſome, requiring more than we are able to perform?

Anſ. No, though he requires great things, yet together with that, he offers ſuch help and grace as will render them, not only poſſible, but tolerably eaſie to us. *His commandments are not grievous*, 1 John 5. 3. *His yoke is eaſie, and his burden light*, Matth. 11. 30.

Queſt. Is God Righteous alſo as a *Judge*, that is, when he comes to Judgment, will he impartially execute his Laws, without favour, or reſpect of Perſons?

Anſ. Yes. For *in his Righteous Judgment, he will render to every Man, according to his deeds. To thoſe, who by continuance in well-doing, ſought Glory, eternal Life. But to all, that obey unrighteouſneſs*, and are impenitent ſinners, *wrath and anguiſh, and that on every one, that doth evil, without reſpect of perſons*, Rom. 2. 5. to 12.

Queſt. What will become then of all thoſe, that break his Laws?

Anſ. Unleſs they make their peace by Repentance, they muſt be condemned to that eternal Death, which his Law threatens.

Queſt. But doth not God ſometimes punith one Man for another's ſin, as the *Children* for the *Parents*, or the *Parents* for the *Children*; whereas the rule of Juſtice is to give every Man his own?

Anſ. No, in all his allotments, he aſſures us *the righteouſneſs of the righteous ſhall be upon him, and the wickedneſs of the wicked ſhall be upon him. Behold*, ſaith he, *all ſouls are mine, as the ſoul of the father, ſo* alſo *the ſoul of the ſon:* and one ſhall not ſuffer for another, but *the ſoul that ſinneth, it ſhall die*, Ezek. 18. 4, 19, 20. Indeed, if a Father ſhares in a Child's fault, by ſetting an evil example to it, or by being too indulgent and not ſeaſonably correcting it; then he ſhall ſuffer, as * *Eli* did: but this is not for his Child's, but for his own ſin, in as much as he concurred to it. And if a Child follow his Father's ſin, he ſhall partake in his puniſhment, as is implied in *Ezekiel*, chap. 18. 14. but that is not becauſe his Father ſinned, but becauſe he imitated it. But if we do not communicate in the ſins of other Men, we ſhall not anſwer for their guilt; for *every man ſhall bear his own burden*, Gal. 6. 5.

* 1 Sam. 2. 23, 24, 29. & *chap.* 3. 13.

Queſt. But what ſay you, when God puniſhes a wicked Parent with want, or an infirm body; doth not that tranſmit Diſeaſes, or Poverty to his innocent Poſterity? Or, when he ſcourges a ſinful Nation, with the Sword, Famine, or Peſtilence; do not thoſe involve the innocent, in common with the Criminals?

Anſ. Yes, but theſe not being directed by Almighty God upon themſelves, but ſeizing them through the neceſſity of ſecond cauſes, and courſe of things, by reaſon

ſon of their joynt Intereſts and Relations; they are not vindictive ſtrokes, nor in the way of puniſhments, but only their calamities and misfortunes. 'Tis their mixt Intereſts, not God's Juſtice, which brings theſe upon their heads.

Queſt. But when Men have forfeited by their own ſins, is not God, who would otherwiſe ſpare, oft-times moved to exact the forfeiture for the ſins of others, who will be afflicted, and are intended to be puniſhed in their misfortunes.

Anſ. Yes, and that, 'tis like, may be a reaſon, why, when God ſays in the *Second Commandment*, he *will puniſh the ſins of* Idolatrous *Fathers*, who are particularly called *haters of him*, *on the Children*, he limits it to the *third*, *and fourth generation*. For 'tis very poſſible the Parents may live ſo long to ſee their Sufferings, and ſo be puniſhed themſelves, in beholding what their unfortunate Poſterities endure for their ſakes. But ſince in this caſe, God only takes juſt forfeitures, and withholds undue favours, and forbearance, when he has great and wiſe reaſons; it is no reflexion at all on his Juſtice, or other Attributes.

Queſt. I ſee God doth not miſplace puniſhments, by puniſhing one for another's offences. But may he not ſeem to miſproportion them, when he puniſhes momentany ſins with eternal torments? Is that conſiſtent with Rules of Juſtice?

Anſ. Yes, whatever puniſhments are juſtly propoſed, may be juſtly exacted. For what a juſt, and wiſe Law-giver denounces, a juſt Judge may execute. And if Men feel the ſmart of it, they can only blame themſelves. For why would they deſerve it? The puniſhment was denounced to the ſin, before they had made themſelves guilty of it. And this denunciation was intended to reſtrain them from committing it. And if they would, by God's help they might have been reſtrained by it. So that be their ſuffering hard, or their puniſhment what it will, they have none to accuſe but themſelves, for having voluntarily called it down upon their own heads.

Queſt. But is it juſt, to propoſe and denounce ſuch heavy puniſhments?

Anſ. Yes, becauſe there is need of them, and Mankind will not be reſtrained by leſs. For ſo ſtrong is the ſinful byaſs and inclination of our Natures, ſo many and great our temptations, and ſo much the advantage of ſenſible and preſent pleaſures above future and unſeen recompences; that Men would never forego the pleaſures of their ſins on ſmaller Conſiderations. Not only the offers of all temptations, but alſo the reluctancies of our own Natures are to be out-weighed, and the great diſadvantage of remote and unſeen things is to be compenſated, by the immenſity, and eternal duration of theſe puniſhments. So that leſs than theſe, would not diſcourage

any

any numbers in our circumſtances. Nay, alas, how few do theſe hinder and diſcourage, as the general wickedneſs of thoſe, who profeſs to believe them, is a lamentable and abundant evidence.

Queſt. But between ſin and puniſhment, as 'tis uſually ſaid, there ſhould be ſome proportion. Whereas ſins, that are ſoon at an end, and ſufferings, that have no end, bear no proportion.

Anſ. Since ſins and ſufferings are no material bodily things, they are not capable of being proportioned to each other by weight, or meaſure, to be weighed out equally in Scales, or meaſured by a Rule and Line, as Bodies are. Their proportion, is not a natural proportion, on account of intrinſick weight and ſize; but a moral proportion, in reſpect of ends and uſes, which is to work on Mens wills, and in their free choice to ſurmount all impediments, and out-weigh all temptations to diſobedience. So that to proportion puniſhments to ſins, is not to equalize them in intrinſick weights and meaſures, there being nothing in their Natures, which can ground ſuch compariſons: but only to proportion puniſhments to temptations, ſo as to make them out-weigh them in our choice and free-wills. And thus eternal puniſhments are proportionate to our offences; that is, they are no more, than are neceſſary to make us forego thoſe pleaſures, or advantages, which recommend

them. Nay, alas! with the greater part of Men, they cannot do this, who are ſo bewitched with ſins preſent pleaſures, that they will enjoy them, though for that they fall at laſt under theſe eternal torments, as we ſee by ſad experience.

Queſt. Since God is thus exactly juſt, and equal in all his ways, it is great Blaſphemy in any to repreſent him as tyrannical, or imperious, that doth good, or hurt, out of meer will or humour, not in regard to the qualifications of his Creatures?

Anſ. So it is. Thus, indeed, the *Indians* thought of the *Devils* they worſhipped. And thus all ſuperſtitious Perſons think of God, who ſeek to appeaſe him by vile flatteries, ſlaviſh tremblings, and forced ſubmiſſions, which are ſuited to ſuch imperious and humourſome tempers. But the true God is moſt juſt, and reaſonable in all his ways, requiring to be ſerved only in the wiſeſt things, and from willing hearts, and recompencing by a moſt unbiaſſed and exact ſentence. All is higheſt reaſon and unblemiſhed Juſtice, nothing weak humour or paſſion, which this Almighty Prince doth.

Queſt. God's punitive Juſtice then, is nothing like impotent Men's implacable revenge, who cannot be at eaſe till their anger is ſated with the ſmart of their Enemies?

Anſ. No, in no wiſe. He doth not puniſh to gratifie private paſſions, and reſentments.

ſentments. When *he afflicts*, it is *not willingly*, Lam. 3. 33. *How ſhall I give thee up?* is his compaſſionate relenting, when a ſinner is almoſt paſt Mercy, *Hoſ.* 11. 8. But it is for wiſe, and publick ends, to keep up Government, to ſecure Goodneſs, and diſcourage Offences. God's Juſtice is a wiſe Reſolution, not a weak Paſſion: and he takes pleaſure in the pains inflicted by it, as they are well and wiſely done; not at all, as angry Men are wont to do, becauſe thereby they have wrecked their ſpite on thoſe that vexed them.

Queſt. Beſides this Juſtice, in allotting future recompences; doth not God alſo ſhow himſelf juſt, in beſtowing preſent, and ſuitable events to actions?

Anſ. Yes, by him, as * *Hannah* acknowledged, *actions are weighed*, before they are accompliſhed, to beſtow events; as well as after, to make retributions, according to Reaſon and Juſtice. And this preſent Judicature, God diſcharges in the Adminiſtration of his Providence. Which muſt make all Men extreme wary what deſigns, or attempts they ingage in, never deſpairing of his Bleſſing in a good way, nor preſuming on it in an ill one, as I ſhall note afterwards. * 1 Sam. 2. 3.

Queſt. Is God preſent in all places, to take notice of all the actions, both of good and bad Men, which he will thus juſtly reward or puniſh?

Anſ. Yes, for *whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence?* Pſal. 139. 7. *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil, and the good,* Prov. 15. 3 *He fills heaven and earth,* ſo that *no man may hide himſelf in ſecret places, that he ſhall not ſee him,* Jer. 23. 24. And the ſenſe of this, as it will induce us every where to pray to him, becauſe, though unſeen, he is every where preſent to hear our Prayers; ſo would it be every where an effectual reſtraint, and hinder us from venturing on any evil, or misbecoming thing. For what Man would preſume to do a rude thing, in his Sovereign's preſence; or an impertinent and trifling one, before any wiſe, and grave Perſons; or a baſe and filthy one, before even a Child, or Stranger, and much more before thoſe, whoſe care 'tis to rebuke, and puniſh ſuch miſdoings? So that in all Places and Companies, we ſhould demean our ſelves with decency and modeſty, with ſerioufneſs and gravity, with circumſpection and care, purity and integrity, if we bethought our ſelves that the Great and Holy God ſtands looking on, and obſerves all our motions.

Queſt. And will it not alſo quicken Mens diligence in good things, and make them active in his Service?

Anſ Yes, it would do ſo even with eye ſervants, who put on a great ſhew of care, and diligence in their Maſter's pre-ſence. And beſides, it would incite Men to

to a great frequency in devout Ejaculations, and ſolemn Addreſſes to Almighty God: it being moſt unſeemly to ſtand mute and regardleſs before him, without ſuitable expreſſions of Adoration and Reverence.

Queſt. And doth this Omnipreſent God ſee even our hearts, and ſecret thoughts?

Anſ. Yes, *he is acquainted with all our ways, he underſtands our thoughts afar off, and there is not a word in our tongue, but he knows it altogether*, Pſal. 139. 2, 3, 4.

Queſt. By this it ſeems, that God knows all that is done by us in this World, and will be incorruptibly juſt in rewarding all that is good, and in puniſhing all that is bad, except repentance prevents it?

Anſ. Yes.

Queſt. What mean you by God's *Faithfulneſs*, another of his Attributes?

Anſ. I mean *two* things. *Firſt*, his inviolable performance of his promiſes. *Secondly*, his conſtant adherence to his Friends, and faithful Servants.

Queſt. God has made moſt Gracious Promiſes to his Servants, both for this Life, and the next. Will he be inviolably Faithful, and keep his Word?

Anſ. Yes, for he is not as Man that can be overſeen, and afterwards ſee his folly, and repent of it. *He is not as man, that he ſhould repent: hath he ſpoken, and ſhall he not make it good?* Num. 23. 19.

Queſt.

Queſt. But when he Promiſes, or makes Gracious Invitations, or Declarations to ſinners, as he * often doth, doth he deal plainly, and mean as he ſays?

* 1 Tim. 2. 4. 2 Pet. 3. 9. Ezek. 33. 11.

Anſ. God forbid we ſhould think otherwiſe. For he is eſſential, unmixt Truth, as incapable of all inſincere arts and double dealings, as he is of down-right falſhoods. He never ſalves his Sincerity or Faithfulneſs, by ſecret reſerves, or evaſive interpretations, being abſolutely above all need of, or temptation to ſuch unworthy Artifices. So that whatſoever we have reaſon to believe, or expect from his Word, is plain Truth, and ſhall be moſt honeſtly and punctually made good. Eſpecially, if, as in † theſe caſes, we have not only his Word, but alſo his *Oath*, which the *Apoſtle* calls *two immutable things, wherein 'tis impoſſible for God to lye*, that is, to delude our expectations, *Heb.* 6. 18. And therefore when God calls, and invites Men, to accept of his Mercy, and return to him; let not any Perſon harbour the leaſt thought, as if he were not in earneſt, or that his ſecret Will doth contradict his Word, or that when he calls for their return he doth not deſire it, or has ſet ſome impregnable Decrees as a bar againſt them, or will ſubſtract that aid which is neceſſary to them, and without which it is impoſſible for them ever to return to him. Theſe, and ſuch like, are ungodly and prophane ſuſpicions, which ſtain and blemiſh the ſpotleſs, and abſolute

† Ezek. 33. 11.

abſolute ſincerity of the moſt true God, with the faults and falſhoods of wicked and deceitful Men. And where is Mens Reaſon, or Reverence, when they queſtion whether God means as he ſays; who yet are ready to reſent it as a great affront, if, on their moſt ſerious aſſertions, any Perſon ſhall make the ſame doubt and queſtion of themſelves?

Queſt. And is he as able to make good his Word, as he is ſincere in paſſing it?

Anſ. Yes, he is the *Almighty* God, that *doth whatſoever he pleaſes, both in heaven, and earth, the ſea, and in all deep places*, Pſal. 135. 6. But as for the Explication, and Remarques upon this Attribute, I ſhall reſerve them, till it comes to be conſidered in its own place in the *Creed*.

Queſt. But when God promiſes, he oftentimes drives long ere he accompliſhes.

Anſ. Though he delays, yet he never forgets, or alters. Neither multitude of affairs, nor length of time, nor after-thoughts, can either wear it out of his Memory, or change his Purpoſe. *He will ever be mindful of his covenant*, Pſal. 111. 5. He is *the faithful God, who keepeth covenant to a thouſand generations*, Deut. 7. 9. *who keepeth truth for ever*, Pſal. 146. 6. And being ſure of God's Promiſes at laſt, we may well have patience in waiting for them: as *Abraham* had, who received not the *Child* of *promiſe*, till he was very old; and his *ſeed* after him,

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him, who entred not into the *promiſed land*, till above * 400 Years after God had made him the promiſe of it.

* Gen. 15. 13. Exod. 12. 41.

Queſt. But, if in hopes of his promiſed rewards, and dread of his juſt puniſhments, we ſhould take the pains to be *Holy as he is Holy*, to make him our Friend: is he never inconſtant to his Friends, and are we in no danger of loſing him?

Anſ. No.

Queſt. One thing we may be ſure of, that he will live as long as we ſhall do, to ſtand in need of him.

Anſ. Yes, for he is Eternal, *from everlaſting to everlaſting, he is God*, Pſal. 90. 2. and *when the heavens, and the earth ſhall be changed, he is the ſame, and his years ſhall have no end*, Pſal. 102. 25, 26, 27.

Queſt. And when once he loves, and takes complacence in us, will he be conſtant, and not alter his affection?

Anſ. Yes, if we continue to love, and ſerve him. For *he is the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and for evermore*, Heb. 13. 8. *with him is no variableneſs, nor* ſo much as *ſhadow of turning*, Jam. 1. 17.

Queſt. But what, if, after we are the Friends of God, we ſhould return to live in ſin?

Anſ. Then we ſhould loſe his Love. For the conſtancy of his Affection, lies not in loving and hating always the ſame Men, but in loving and hating always for the ſame reaſon. 'Tis an immovable fixedneſs, not

not upon the ſame Perſons, but upon the ſame carriage and qualities. For *if the wicked*, whom God hates, *turn from his wickedneſs; he ſhall ſurely live, and not die.* And *if the righteous*, whom God loves, *turn from his righteouſneſs, and doth according to the ways of the wicked, all his former righteouſneſs ſhall be forgotten, and in his ſins, that he hath* ſince *committed, ſhall he die*, Ezek. 18. 21, 22, 24.

Queſt. Another Attribute above-mentioned, is the *Wiſdom of God.* What mean you by God's *Wiſdom.*

Anſ. His moſt abſolute Underſtanding, which clearly ſees through all things, and knows what means are moſt proper, and what ſeaſons beſt to move in, to bring about every purpoſe,

Queſt. Is it one part of God's Wiſdom, to ſet the juſteſt rate and eſtimate on all things, not only clearly apprehending the truth, but proportionably valuing the worth of them, never magnifying a little, or undervaluing a great and weighty matter?

Anſ. Yes, to be fond of worthleſs things, is no property of the Wiſe, but of Children and ſimple Perſons; for ſuch only are apt to be taken with Toys, and Trifles. Little things may greatly delight, or diſturb little Spirits: but the Great and All-wiſe God, is moſt Wiſe and Great in all his reſentments, never ſetting more by any things, than is really in them, or valuing

ing them without, or beyond juſt cauſe. As all ill things he hates, ſo all empty ones he ſlights: proportioning all his reſentments to the true weight and worth of Objects, that they may be always wiſe, and worthy of himſelf And therefore no Men muſt ever fancy to gain God, or fear to loſe him, by ſuch little things, and trivial indifferencies, as have little or nothing in them, but are below the reſentment of any intelligent, and prudent Man.

Queſt. Indeed, a ſmall indifferent matter, is not fit to bear a great reſentment, either on one ſide, or other. So that frequent Croſſings, or Sprinkling our ſelves with Holy Water, or Viſiting certain Shrines, or putting on ſome Religious Habits, or other empty and uncommanded Ceremonies, are no more fit to gain the good preſence, and protection of God; than the ſight of a Surplice, a Poſture, a Place, or other unforbidden Ceremony, are to forfeit and drive them from us

Anſ Very right; but what doth either the one, or the other, muſt always be things of weight and moment. In particular, his own Laws, which are all about the moſt important matters, contain the things he likes. So that we gain, and pleaſe him, by obedience; and offend, and loſe him, by diſobeying. And therefore no Men muſt build on uncommanded abſtinencies or ſeverities, or on any affected ſingularities; nor, in general, muſt we ever

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ſeek the favour, or ſhun the diſpleaſure of Almighty God, by arbitrary fancies and inventions of our own, but always according to what is written.

Queſt. If this All-wiſe God ſees through all things, he perfectly underſtands our Natures?

Anſ. Yes, he made our hearts, and all our faculties, and ſo thorowly underſtands them, ſeeing clearly into all their turnings and windings, tempers and inclinations, what things will incite and draw them on, and what again will effectually reſtrain, and divert them from any purpoſe.

Queſt. If he can tell how far every thing will work upon us, he can foreſee the iſſue and effect of all means and methods; and, in particular, what force Preaching, Perſuaſion, Reproof, Diſcipline, Promiſes, Threatnings, or other means of Grace, will have upon Mankind at large, and what upon all particular Men, of every genius, intereſt, and temptation?

Anſ. Yes, he knew aſſuredly that *Pharaoh would not let the Iſraelites go*, no not *for all his plagues*, Exod. 3. 19. And that *the elders of Iſrael, would hearken to the voice of Moſes*, verſe 18. And that *Tyre, and Sydon, would have repented at the ſight of Chriſt's* great, and *wonderful works*, Matth. 11. 21. And this muſt beget in us the greateſt Opinion, and Reverence for all God's Ordinances. So that no Perſons muſt ever ask, as ſome prophanely do, what good it doth to go

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ſo oft to Prayers; or ſay they can benefit as much by reading at home, when they are called upon to go to Church, and hear a Sermon; or ſlightfully neglect, or undervalue any other means of God's appointing. Since God has preſcribed Prayers, and Sacraments, and Preaching, and the Authority of Spiritual Guides, and the Unity of the Church, *&c.* as perpetual, and powerful means of Faith and good Life; who ſhall dare to accuſe any of them of weakneſs, or unfitneſs; and pretend better to underſtand their efficacy, than he that underſtands all things; or put down his, and ſet up their own Wiſdom, by neglecting the old, and beating out new ways for themſelves?

Queſt. Doth God alſo ſee the beſt times, and the fitteſt ſeaſons for every purpoſe?

Anſ. Yes, ſo exactly, as never in the leaſt degree either to precipitate any buſineſs, or ſtay ſo long, till the fitteſt minute for it has over-paſſed him. And this muſt teach us never to think any Mercies too long delaied, or any Afflictions from his hand too faſt haſtned. Though in caſe of good deſired, the preſent generally ſeems beſt to Fleſh and Blood; yet in truth God's own time is always fitteſt. So that whether any things ſent by him, come too ſoon, or too ſlow, in reſpect of our wiſhes they come juſt when they ſhould, neither too early, nor too late, in reſpect of exactneſs of ſeaſon, and uſefulneſs.

Queſt.

Queſt. If the Character of the Great God, be to be ſo Holy, and Juſt, and True, and Faithful, and Good, and Patient, *&c.* as you have ſhewed, then no Man, who conſiders what he ſays, can reaſonably pretend to love God, if he loves not theſe excellencies?

Anſ. Very right. He can only have a blind love, as one that is fond of he knows not what: Or a miſtaken love, as one that fancies God to be what he is not. But he has no intelligent, rational love of God, unleſs he love thoſe excellencies, that make up the Godhead. And if Men would worthily love theſe in God, they muſt ſeek to attain, and tranſcribe them out in themſelves too.

Queſt. At this rate no ungodly evil Man, who is an enemy of theſe Divine Tempers, can love God.

Anſ. No; they may love ſome things in God, when taken aſunder: as his Wiſdom, which will move their admiration; or his Power, whilſt he employs it for them; or his Goodneſs, ſo long as they feel its bountiful effects. But, if they ſeriouſly conſider, they cannot love the Godhead, where all theſe properties are put together. For therein is an Holineſs, that is irreconcileable to their ſins; and a Juſtice, that will be inexorable in puniſhing them; a Faithfulneſs, that will execute Threatnings, as well as fulfil Promiſes; and an Almighty Power, to be employed in Eternally tor-

menting thoſe that offend, as well as in Eternally rewarding all that truly ſerve him. And a God of this Character, is all terrour unto them. If they conſiderately view him, they may ſoon ſee enough to make againſt them, which will keep them from being truly in love with, or deſirous of him. No Man can freely, and intelligently be in love with God, but he that is, or deſires to be like him: and accordingly in *Scripture*, the *love of God* doth ordinarily include *obedience to him.*

Queſt. If theſe excellencies make up God's Character, then when any Perſons by his Grace have once attained them, they are like God, and *partakers of the Divine Nature.*

Anſ. Yes, *his Image* conſiſts in *righteouſneſs, and true holineſs*, Eph. 4. 24. So that whoſoever are endowed with theſe, are truly good, and Godlike Perſons.

Of God's Providence.

CHAP. II.

Of God's Providence.

The Contents.

God preſerves all things he hath made. And governs them. He obſerves all our actions. And all our temptations. He diſpoſes of all good events. For he gives the fruits of the Earth. And Children. And ſucceſs in buſineſs. How this ſhould influence us in any enterprize, ſhown in ſundry particulars. He gives promotion. And the favour of Men. And life and health to enjoy all other Bleſſings. And all Spiritual Mercies. He diſpoſes alſo of ill events. As death of Friends. Unfortunate accidents, that afflict us in our Bodies, or Goods. Croſſes, and obſtructions, in our deſigns and buſineſs. Sufferings from ill Men. How God ſtints, and governs theſe. No excuſe of their unjuſt violence, to ſay

they are God's Inſtruments, and follow Providence. He ſends alſo miſcarriages of State, and Government: and preſides in the moſt tumultuary, and diſtreſſed times. In theſe, ſtill have Faith in Providence. But God muſt not be called the Author, or ſender of thoſe evils, which we bring down upon our ſelves, by our own faults, or follies.

Queſtion. YOU have already ſhowed what we are to believe of the *Being*, and *Attributes* of God. But another thing to be known of him, you ſaid, is his *Providence*. What mean you by that?

Anſ. His Preſerving, and Governing us, and all things which he hath made.

Queſt. Doth God preſerve all that he hath made?

Anſ. Yes, both in their Beings, and in their Powers and Perfections. *He preſerveth man, and beaſt*, Pſalm 36. 6. *He gives to all their life, and breath, and all things: for in him we live, move, and have our being*, Acts 17. 25, 28. In particular, he preſerves Men in their Perſons, and Faculties. So that no Man loſes, either his Memory, or Underſtanding, or the uſe of any of his Senſes, or any other bodily Powers and Perfections, but only when, and ſo far as God orders, or permits. And this muſt teach all Perſons, under any apprehenſion of diminution, or loſs of their Senſes, or Intellectuals, or other Powers and Perfections.

ons, not to distract and afflict their hearts, by fearing and fancying the worst. For God that gave these Powers, is still the continuer and preserver of them, and 'tis very hard if he may not be trusted with them. Let us commit them cheerfully to him, and he will either continue the use of them, or supply the defect, and repair the detriment, that shall come by their loss, or diminution.

Quest. Must it not teach us the same, in all prospects of dangerous, or tormenting distempers too?

Ans. Yes, for he is the preserver of our health, and strength, as well as other faculties. And therefore when any Persons are entring under any bodily Pains, or Diseases, let them endeavour to bear the present burden with patience. But not make it heavier, by painful anticipations of futurities; fancying what they shall do, if their Distemper grows up to the greatest extremities; or, if some other cross Distemper, should at the same time incapacitate, and deprive them of those helps, which yield them their greatest ease and support under this; or, if their Pain and Sickness be prolonged to such a distance, as will outlast both their strength, and patience. For if God is their preserver, is not the timing, and stinting of all these in his hands? And will not he order all, in compassionate proportion to our strength and necessities, and the supplies of his

own Grace? Beſides, 'tis great folly, as well as diſtruſt, to anticipate diſtant maladies, by precipitate fears, and tormenting fancies. When all the while, God's Providence may prove as kind, as our melancholy imagination is cruel, and preſerve all that by a tender care, which we throw away in an over-haſty fear, by fancying to our ſelves very dreadful futurities, wherewith he never intends to try us.

Queſt. Doth God alſo govern all, that he hath made?

Anſ. Yes.

Queſt. Wherein is that ſhown?

Anſ. In *two* things. *Firſt*, In obſerving all actions. *Secondly*, In ordering, and diſpoſing all events.

Queſt. Doth God obſerve all our actions?

Anſ. Yes, for *the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding both the evil, and the good*, Prov. 15. 3. And this ſhould ingage us in every thing to keep Innocency, and a clear Conſcience, ſince he ſtands always looking on, to ſee how we acquit our ſelves.

Queſt. The belief of this preſent Providence, in obſerving all actions, is neceſſary to all expectation of future recompences.

Anſ. Very right. For if here God takes no cognizance, he can afterwards make no retributions, not knowing what Men have done, for him to reward, or puniſh. And therefore,

fore, as to Religion, it is all one to deny the Being of a God, as to deny his Providence; and *Epicureans*, in this reſpect, are as bad as *Atheiſts*.

Queſt. As God is moſt watchful in obſerving all our actions, is he not equally ſo, in marking all our trials and temptations?

Anſ. Yes, he not only ſees, but ſends, and ſets bounds to them, and proportions anſwerable ſuccours, to prevent their prevailing over us. *God is faithful, who will not ſuffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but will, with the temptation, make a way to eſcape* what is over-hard, *that we may be able to bear* the reſt of *it*, 1 Cor. 10. 13. And therefore whenſoever we fall under any great trials, or fear them, we muſt neither truſt to our own ſtrength without God, nor deſpair of conquering them by his help. But ſeeking to him with earneſt Prayers, and watching againſt the temptation with much heedfulneſs, have Faith in his Spirit and Providence, aſſuredly believing, that he will either put by and break its ſtrength, or increaſe ours.

Queſt. And doth God order, and diſpoſe of all events?

Anſ. Yes, even thoſe that befal the meaneſt Creatures. For *not a Sparrow falls to the ground, without our heavenly Father*, Matth. 10. 29. But eſpecially thoſe, which befal Men, for whom his care extends to things ſo minute, that *even the hairs of their*

head are all numbred, verſe 30. He ſends all the good, and evil, that happens to us in this World; ſo that we meet him at all turns, and muſt diſcern his Hand in all that happens.

Queſt. Doth God order for us all the good events we meet with?

Anſ. Yes, both all thoſe, which come upon us by accident; for though they are accidents, and unexpected things to us, they are Providences and deſigned favours in God; and likewiſe all which come by our own care and pains, ſince when we labour and contrive for any thing, 'tis his Bleſſing that gives ſucceſs to us.

Queſt. What muſt this teach us?

Anſ. Both to be thankful to him for every good thing, whilſt we have them; and to live upon Providence, when we want them; conſidering, that God has the Gift and Donation of all thoſe things, which we need, and that he has taken the care of us, and will beſtow them when they are fit for us. This dependance upon God, or living upon Providence, is the conſtant Character of Religious Men in the *Scriptures*. *Abraham*, and *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, and *Joſeph*, and all other Holy Men in all times, always attributed all the good they injoyed to God, and truſted in him for the ſupply of all they wanted. And this Life of Faith, or confidence in him, is the great mark of their Religion. *The juſt ſhall live* or be ſuſtained *by Faith*, that is, in God's care,

care, and kindneſs, and eſpecial promiſes, *Habak.* 2. 4.

Queſt. Is it God, who gives us all the *Fruits of the Earth*, and *plentiful Seaſons?*

Anſ. Yes, *he viſiteth the earth, and watereth it, he maketh it ſoft with ſhowres, and bleſſeth the ſpringing thereof. He crowns the year with his goodneſs, and his paths drop fatneſs*, Pſalm 65. 9, 10, 11. *He cauſeth the graſs to grow for the cattel, and herb for the ſervice of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oyl to make him a cheerful countenance, and bread to ſtrengthen man's heart*, Pſalm 104. 14, 15.

Queſt. What muſt this teach us?

Anſ. Before the Fruits of the Earth are grown up, it muſt make us Till the Ground, and Plow in hope that God will give a Bleſſing to it. Nay, in a hard Seed-time, or diſcouraging Seaſon, or under any ſeemingly approaching ſcarcity, it muſt quiet the Husbandman's heart, and the hearts of all others, with truſt in God's Providence, who can open his Hand, and puſh on what he had kept back when he pleaſes, and proportion his ſupplies to our neceſſities. *The eyes of all*, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, muſt *wait upon God, for he gives them their meat*, and that *in due ſeaſon. He opens his hand, and ſatisfieth the deſire of every living thing*, Pſalm 145. 15, 16.

Queſt. And what muſt it teach us, after we have reaped them?

Anſ.

Anſ. With cheerful, and thankful hearts, to give, not only the Prieſt his juſt due, but likewiſe the Poor, who is another of God's receivers, his portion. Which is moſt neceſſary, not only to expreſs our thanks to God, who hath ſent us all theſe Fruits, but alſo to increaſe our own ſtore, and bring down God's Bleſſing upon our Fields, which will multiply the Seed ſown, and bring in more. This, *Solomon* ſays, will be the effect of giving to the *Poor*. *There is that ſcattereth, and yet increaſeth: the liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat, and he that watereth, ſhall be watered alſo himſelf*, Prov. 11. 24, 25. And the ſame increaſe we may hope to reap from paying the *Prieſt* all his juſt dues alſo. *Honour the Lord with thy ſubſtance, and with the firſt-fruits of all thine increaſe: ſo ſhall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy preſſes ſhall burſt out with new wine:* that is, God will give thee for this, both a plentiful Harveſt, and a rich Vintage, *Prov.* 3. 9, 10.

Queſt. Indeed, if God's Bleſſing maketh Rich, 'tis obvious to infer, that being juſt to the Prieſt, and charitable to the Poor, who are both under God's eſpecial care, is like to gain him, and ſo is the trueſt way of thriving?

Anſ. Yes, he that thinks Providence gives the increaſe, will readily believe it; and he who tries, if he is not wanting to it on other accounts, will experimentally find, that this is not the way to diminiſh, but

but to increaſe an eſtate. This, *Azariah the chief Prieſt* told *King Hezekiah*, was the cauſe of that ſurpluſage of plenty, which God beſtowed upon the *Jews*, 2 Chron. 31. The King had *commanded all the people*, to pay juſtly all their Tythes and Offerings, which had been fraudulently withheld, *to the Prieſts and Levites*, for their *incouragement in the Law of the Lord:* beginning the Practice with his own example, paying all his dues to the Church, *verſe* 3, 4. *And as ſoon as this commandment came abroad, the people brought* in all their Tythes and Oblations, as they fell due *in abundance, the firſt-fruits of corn, of wine, and oyl, and hony, and all the increaſe of the field, the tythe of oxen, and ſheep, and the tythe of holy things which were conſecrated unto the Lord their God, the tythe of all things brought they in abundantly, and laid them heaps by heaps*, verſe 5, 6. *And when Hezekiah, and the Princes, came and ſaw the heaps*, and thereby underſtood the vaſt increaſe the People had received, which yielded ſuch abundance of Dues to the Prieſts, *he bleſſed God* for it, *and asked Azariah* concerning the cauſe of this mighty ſurpluſage, *verſe* 8, 9. *And Azariah the chief Prieſt anſwered him, and ſaid, Since the people began to bring the offerings into the houſe of the Lord, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for the Lord hath bleſſed his people, and that which is left, is this great ſtore.* That is, ſince out of their Fruits, which are the Gift of God, they have faithfully paid their Dues to God,

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he has ſo increaſed their ſtore, that our ſhare comes to ſo much we know not how to diſpoſe of it, but have left all theſe heaps thou ſeeſt, after we, and our Families, have eaten, and are ſatisfied, *verſe* 10.

Queſt. I ſee it teaches us, both in Duty, and prudence, to give willingly, and cheerfully, the Poors Dole, and the Prieſts Dues: but doth it not alſo teach us how to injoy, and ſpend the reſt, which remains to our ſelves?

Anſ. Yes, for coming from the free Bounty of God, we muſt injoy it with a thankful and cheerful heart, not with murmuring, envy, or diſcontent, like Men that are proner to ſpy faults than to own favours, and are never pleaſed. Beſides, ſince it is God's gift, we muſt take care that God be honoured by it, and never diſhonour him, or abuſe our ſelves, by ſpending it upon vice, or vanity, but own his Gift in a temperate, and ſober uſe of it. Yea, I add, in a charitable uſe too. For theſe Fruits God gives to us, not as Proprietors, but * *Stewards*, to diſtribute abroad to the neceſſities of others, after we have ſerved our ſelves. So that not only temperance and thankful hearts, but Alms and Charity alſo, are neceſſary to hallow our enjoyments. *Give alms of ſuch things, as you have, and behold all things are clean unto you,* Luke 11. 41.

* 1 Pet. 4. 10.

Queſt.

Queſt. Is it God alſo that gives us *Children?*

Anſ. Yes, *Children, or the Fruit of the Womb, are a reward, and heritage, that cometh of the Lord:* that is, he diſpoſes of them to whom he pleaſes, as a Parent doth of his Eſtate, *Pſalm* 127. 3. And therefore, as we muſt reſt ſatisfied whilſt we have none, becauſe it is God that withholds them: ſo muſt we truſt in God when we have many of them believing, that, ſince, as our Saviour ſaith, * *the life is more than meat,* he that ſent Mouths will ſend Meat; and that, as they were at firſt his Gift, they will be ſtill his Care; and that he, who provides for the *Ravens*, will much more provide for them, *Luke* 12. 24.

* Matth. 6. 25.

Queſt. Is it the ſame Providence of God, that makes us *thrive in our Trades*, and gives a *proſperous ſucceſs* to us in any *buſineſs?*

Anſ. Yes, *the horſe is provided againſt the day of Battel, but ſafety is of the Lord*, Prov. 21. 31. Though *a man's heart deviſeth his way*, that is, Men hammer out a project, yet *the Lord directeth his ſteps*, that is, God determines the event, and orders ſuch an iſſue, as, perhaps, he never intended, *Prov.* 16. 9. Men may contrive, and purſue methods; but God ſtill muſt give events. *The way of man is not in himſelf, it is not in man that walks to direct his own ſteps*, that is, to fix and determine them on any final iſſues, *Jer.* 10. 23.

Queſt.

Queſt. Muſt not this teach us, whenſoever we begin any buſineſs, or ſet upon any attempts, to recommend them firſt to God, by Prayers or Pious Ejaculations, and to place our chiefeſt confidence in his Bleſſing?

Anſ. Yes, *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he ſhall direct thy paths*, Prov. 3. 6. *commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts ſhall be eſtabliſhed*, that is, ſhall take effect, *Prov.* 16. 3. And I think there is little queſtion to be made, but that Men miſcarry far oftner, than otherwiſe they would, in their deſigns and buſineſs, becauſe they truſt too much to their own care, and skill, and human aids, and ſeek no more to God, to ingage the furtherance of his good Providence.

Queſt Muſt Men ſeek thus to God, even in things wherein they are beſt skilled themſelves, and when they are confident they take the ſureſt methods?

Anſ. Yes, for the ſureſt means without a good Providence, will not ſecure the iſſues. *The race*, as *Solomon* obſerved, *is not always to the ſwift, nor the battel to the ſtrong, nor favour to men of skill*, Eccleſ. 9. 11. So that when Men are in the wiſeſt courſes, or moſt probable preparations, they have need ſtill to look up to God, who muſt conſummate all by his aſſiſtance. *Truſt in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own underſtanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he ſhall direct thy paths*, Prov. 3. 5, 6.

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There is very much indeed, lies in wiſe management, *every purpoſe*, as *Solomon* ſays, being *eſtabliſhed by counſel*, Prov. 20. 18. But when wiſe managers ſhew a Religious dependance, and truſt in God too, that is the way to aſſure the event. *He that handles a matter wiſely, ſhall find good:* but if, together with that, *he truſt in the Lord* more than his own skill, *happy is he*, Prov. 16. 20.

Queſt. But if the event depends thus on God, till we ſee what way he will take, we cannot be ſure of it. And muſt not this teach us not to be too poſitive, but modeſt in theſe expectations, and promiſe the deſired iſſue to our ſelves, ſtill with this reſerve, if God ſees it fit for us?

Anſ. Yes, *for man's goings are of the Lord, how can a man then underſtand his own way?* that is, foreſee the event of it, ſince God oftentimes over-rules their motions, to ends far diſtant from their thoughts, *Prov.* 20. 24. And this, as it will keep us from being too confident of gaining any good things, will preſerve us alſo from deſponding under the apparent danger of any bad ones: ſince, when they are neareſt to us, God can turn them off by a thouſand ways, nay, make them ſerve as means to accompliſh our advantage.

Queſt. Since he is to give the end of all actions, may we not ſafely truſt him with that, and do what we ought to do, though thereby we foreſee danger of diſpleaſing others, or of prejudicing our worldly intereſts?

Anſ.

Anſ. Yes, we muſt be careful to do our duty, that is our part: and truſt him with events, for that is his. God oft ſurprizes us with iſſues; ſo that a Man cannot foreſee the end of his own way, which frequently will be better than he expects it. And this in the moſt perillous and threatning times, ſhould teach all Men to be more thoughtful, and concerned for the exact doing of their duty, than for eſcaping the croſs, which may ſeem to accompany it For if then they can be ſo happy, as to conſider wiſely, and perform what they ought, they may leave Providence to give it a good effect, and take care they be no loſers by it.

Queſt. And ſince we can bring no buſineſs about, but by God's Bleſſing, muſt not this teach us never to ſeek to gain our end by any ſin?

Anſ. Moſt certainly, for that is the way to offend God, and move him, not to bleſs, but to blaſt our deſign. If we hope to ſuccede, as I have obſerved from *Solomon*, *we muſt commit our work to him*, and that can be only in well doing: *we muſt acknowledge him*, and then not ſeek help from any ſin, ſince that were to renounce him. *Let thine eyes look ſtraight on*, ſo as to aim only at juſt ends, *and ponder the way of thy feet*, ſo as to take none but lawful methods, *and* then *thy paths ſhall be eſtabliſhed*, Prov. 4. 25, 26.

Queſt.

Queſt. And the ſame you will ſay of driving Trade, by falſe Weights and Meaſures, or by belying Wares, or ſetting exacting Prices, or otherwiſe uſing indirect Arts, or deceitful Speeches and Pretences?

Anſ. Yes, for all theſe in God's Eyes are an abomination, and ſo can never bring down, but may well ſtop a Bleſſing. Which every Man ought ſeriouſly to conſider, who believes a good Trade to be of God's ſending.

Queſt. If we are to have all the good effect of our pains, and projects, from God, we muſt have it at his time. And ought we not to think his the beſt Seaſon?

Anſ. Yes, he ſees what opportunities are fitteſt, and brings about a good event with moſt advantage, to thoſe that wait his time, and truſt him with it: as he did to *Joſeph*, the *rule over his brethren*; and to *David*, the *poſſeſſion of the kingdom*. *I the Lord will haſten it in its time*, Iſaiah 60. 22. *He will ariſe, and have mercy upon Sion, when the time of favour, yea, the ſet time is come*, Pſal. 102. 13. And this muſt teach all Men, in any hopes, or purſuits of good, never to be too haſty, or, by any indirect or evil ways of their own, to take the matter out of God's hand, but patiently to wait his time, and ſtay till he ſees fit to fulfil their expectation. *He that believeth, will not make haſte*, Iſaiah 28. 16.

Queſt. But when Providence is ſlow in bringing longing deſires to paſs, and lays fair opportunities in their way, may not Men turn aſide a little to anticipate, and prevent God's orderings?

Anſ. No, for that is to take the matter out of God's hand, where it muſt needs ſucceed to beſt advantage, and thereby endanger, both the loſs of God's favour, and all the concurrent Mercies depending on thoſe methods, whereby in his own time he has determined to promote, or ſave us. *Joſeph*, when the *keeper of the priſon* had * put the *keys* into his hand, might very probably have made his own eſcape. But had he impatiently catched at that opportunity before God's time, he had not been preferred, as he was when God delivered him. And his Father *Jacob*, when he would haſtily † ſnatch the *promiſed birth-right* by a falſhood, underwent therefore great hazards, and a long baniſhment; all which would probably have been ſaved, had he patiently ſtayed, till God's Wiſdom had found a way for it.

* Gen. 39. 22, 23.

† Gen. 27.

Queſt. If God muſt thus give ſucceſs to all means, then no deſign can take effect, though never ſo wiſely laid, or powerfully backed, if it croſſes the deſigns of his Providence?

Anſ. No; neither ſuch, as are managed by the deepeſt Counſel and Advice; for *there is no wiſdom, nor counſel, nor underſtanding againſt the Lord*, Prov. 21. 30. Nor ſuch,

as

as are puſhed on by the moſt violent, and * powerful force. For though *the horſe is provided againſt the day of battel, yet ſafety is from the Lord*, verſe 31. And therefore let Men always take care wiſely to fix their hearts, and hopes on ſuch things, as they have reaſon to believe God will ſupport, and then be confident, that, though to try their Faith and Patience, he may ſuffer them to be endangered, or diſtreſſed for a while, as he ſuffered *Joſeph* to be impriſoned, and *David* to be perſecuted, and the *Church* in the * *Revelations* to be obſcured and *driven* from places of habitation and reſort *into the wilderneſs*, yet at laſt he will viſibly ſtand by the things he doth eſpouſe, and make them prove too hard for the moſt Politick, or Puiſſant adverſaries.

* Pſal. 66. 3, 7.

† Chap. 12.

Queſt. If no work can take effect without God, then no work of our Enemies. And may not this comfort us to think, that whilſt he deſigns well for us, no contrivance, or power, of Men, or Devils, can harm us?

Anſ. It may moſt juſtly. As it did holy *David*, who when his Enemies *deviſed to take away his life*, made this his ſupport, that whatever they contrived, *his times were in God's hand*, Pſal. 31. 13, 15. *This*, ſays *Iſaiah*, *is the heritage of God's ſervants, no weapon ſhall proſper, that is formed againſt them; and every tongue, that ſhall implead them in judgment, ſhall they condemn*, Iſaiah 54. 17. So that no craft, or cruelty can deſtroy, whilſt God is minded to preſerve us.

Queſt. I perceive we muſt acknowledge God, the Donor of ſucceſs to every work, or deſign: but is it he alſo that gives promotion?

Anſ. Yes, *both riches, and honour come of him, in his hand is power and might, and in him it is to make great, and to give ſtrength to all*, 1 Chron. 29. 1. *Promotion cometh neither from the eaſt, nor from the weſt, nor from the ſouth. But God is the judge; he puts down one, and ſetteth up another*, Pſal. 75. 6, 7. And therefore no Man muſt ever ſeek to exalt himſelf by any ſinful, or indirect means, as vile flatteries, and ſinful compliances, and ſerving wicked turns, and undermining others, and the like. For if promotion is not wholly in the will of ſinful Man, but depends on the over-ruling Providence of God, theſe certainly are not the way to make an intereſt.

Queſt. When a Man is a riſing then, I perceive it is in no wiſe ſafe to ſtep aſide, or take up the leaſt ſin, though it ſeem to lie in the ready way to make his fortune?

Anſ. No; when all is done, prudent integrity is the beſt counſeller, and the ſureſt way to maintain a preſent ſtation, or advance higher, or to have a good ſupport, and ſuch a kind Providence, as will make amends, when thereby we miſs of either. *He that walketh uprightly, walketh ſurely*, ſaith *Solomon*, Prov. 10. 9. *The integrity of the upright*, ſays he again, *ſhall guide, and direct them*: yea, in any dangers, *it ſhall deliver them.*

them. But if by wicked craft, and ungodly policy, Men ſhall chuſe to do ill to ſerve a turn, *the perverſeneſs of* ſuch *tranſgreſſors ſhall deſtroy them:* And inſtead of being ſaved, or advanced, *they ſhall fall by their own wickedneſs, and be taken in their own naughtineſs*, Prov. 11. 3 5, 6. Whilſt *righteouſneſs keeps him that is upright in the way*, by God's uſual and juſt Judgment, *wickedneſs overthrows the ſinner*, Prov. 13. 6.

Queſt. Since God gives promotion, is not this enough to make all Men contented and ſatisfied, when they reſt in a lower ſtate, and ſee others exalted?

Anſ. Yes, becauſe their lower ſtate is what God allots, who can eaſily exalt them, if he ſees it convenient for his own Glory, and their good, againſt which, no wiſe Perſon would deſire it. And it is not only the higheſt duty, but the trueſt intereſt of all Men, to let God chuſe for them every eſtate; becauſe he alone knows perfectly all the troubles and temptations of it, and their fitneſs for it. He underſtands us all far better, than the wiſeſt of us underſtand our ſelves: and therefore beſt ſees what condition is proper for us. Beſides, if he give us leſs here, the day of Judgment will make up all the ſeemingly unequal diſtributions of this World, ſo that we may hope for the more hereafter. *Lazarus*, though a very good Man, was *extreme poor*, and *full of ſores*, and in this World *received his evil things.* But his

more than ordinary wants in *this preſent life*, were abundantly made up by the ſurpluſage of bliſs in *Abraham's boſom*, Luke 16. 20, 21, 22, 25. And when Perſons of equal goodneſs, have not equal encouragements of Providence allotted them in this life, they have the more in reverſion, and greater things to expect afterwards.

Queſt. Doth God alſo give all that favour, we find in the Eyes of Men?

Anſ. Yes, *the Lord gave Joſeph favour in the ſight of the keeper of the priſon*, Gen. 39. 21. and *gave him favour in the ſight of Pharaoh*, Act. 7. 10. and *Iſrael favour in the ſight of the Egyptians*, Exod. 3. 21. and *Daniel favour, and tender love, with the prince of the Eunuchs*, Dan. 1. 9. The skill, and goodneſs, of ſome excellent and uſeful Perſons, may deſerve to be favoured: but *favour is not always to men of skill*, but only where God bends the hearts of Men, and beſtows it, *Eccleſ.* 9. 11. All the favour, which any Men ſhew us, is our good God's, who conveys it to us through their hearts, and hands.

Queſt. When we come to them for any favours, is it God that helps us to addreſs with moving Speech, and with clear and perſuaſive Reaſon, and Arguments?

Anſ. Yes, and inclines them too to hearken to it, and return us ſoft, and gracious Anſwers. As *the preparation of the heart*, in him that pleads and craves favour; ſo *the anſwer of the tongue*, in him that grants it,

it, *is from the Lord*, Prov. 16. 1. And therefore in all our ſuits, and dependances on Men, we muſt firſt ſeek to, and place our truſt in God. For if our ſuit pleaſe him, he will help us ſo to deliver our requeſts, and to prefer them at ſuch times, that they ſhall be ſure to receive, and be pleaſed with them too.

Queſt. And will they be ſure to do this, though at the ſame time they are ſolicited, and inclined very different ways, and have in their Eye and Intention many other projects, which are ready to oppoſe, and juſtle out ours?

Anſ. Yes, for when *there are many devices in a man's heart, nevertheleſs the counſel of the Lord*, or that device among them all which God eſpouſes, *it ſhall ſtand*, Prov. 19. 21. And therefore in any matters, which God loves and eſpouſes, let no good Men deſpond, becauſe of the inſtability and unſettledneſs, or becauſe of the number, intereſt, or oppoſiteneſs of other Counſels, whereby he is exerciſed, who has the diſpoſal of them. For God can quickly alter his meaſures, and turn his deliberations as he will, and fix the determination where he pleaſes.

Queſt. If we cannot have the favour of Men, but by the gift and bleſſing of God, muſt not this teach us never to commit any ſin to pleaſe Men, nor do the leaſt offence to him, in hopes thereby to ingratiate our ſelves with them, either to gain their favour, or to keep and retain it?

Anſ. Yes, it muſt teach us this. For if we fall out with God, he can quickly ſpoil our credit, and favour with Men too. But if we keep favour with him, by holding punctually to well-doing, he rules the hearts of all Men, and can either preſerve us in their favour, or protect us from their diſpleaſure. Nay, in all likelihood, he both can, and will, not only continue to us our old Friends, who muſt needs ſecretly approve our upright dealings, though we comply not with their own private ends; but alſo add more. For *when a man's ways pleaſe the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him*, Prov. 16. 7. So that Men muſt never neglect their own duty, or commit any ſin, to pleaſe great Perſons, or to keep peace with their violent, or malicious Neighbours. Let them adhere ſtrictly to their duty, which will ſecure the favour of God: and then his Providence will add the favour of Men, where he ſees that will do them good, or make their lives competently happy, and comfortable without it; or however, make good the want thereof to them abundantly in another World.

Queſt. I ſee 'tis Providence that gives us Children, to recompence our cares, and perpetuate our memories, and ſucceſs to our honeſt labours, and wealth, and honour, and favour: and is it not the ſame God ſtill, that gives us both life, and health to injoy them?

Anſ.

Anſ. Yes, for *in him we live, move, and have our being*, Act. 17. 28. When *he hides his face, all things are troubled: he takes away their breath, and they die, and are turned to their duſt*, Pſal. 104. 29. And for this we are not only thankfully to own his gift, but ſince we every minute live upon him, we ought by all means continually to live to him, and not lay out our health, and ſtrength, in vice, or vanities. For whenſoever theſe are ſhamefully miſ-ſpent, 'tis but for him to hold his hand, and we are in ſickneſs, pains, or death the next moment.

Queſt. If God is thus the giver, and the reſtorer of health, then, when Men are in ſickneſs, fervent Prayer is one ſtep to a cure. And when they ſend for a Phyſician, and follow his preſcriptions, they muſt look up to God as well as to him, and truſt he will work their recovery, by what the other orders for them.

Anſ. Yes, they muſt depend on him as the chief Phyſician. Men muſt not preſume God will work without means, which were to put him to work Miracles. But when they have uſed the likelieſt means, and taken the beſt ways they can, they muſt perfect all by Prayer and dependance on God, hoping he will give a Bleſſing to them. The Prayer of the Miniſter, as well as the preſcription of the Doctor, is a proper means to recover an infirm, or ſick Perſon. And accordingly S. *James* directs

rects any that are *ſick*, to *ſend for the elders of the Church, that they may pray over him*, Jam. 5. 14.

Queſt. From what you have ſaid, 'tis plain that God's Providence allots for us all the good things of this life. And is it not he too, that orders for us all Spiritual advantages; not only virtuous endowments, but alſo all outward means and opportunities of Virtue and Religion, which muſt fit us for a better life?

Anſ. Yes, moſt certainly. And therefore, as we muſt thankfully injoy, and make the beſt uſe we can of thoſe means, and opportunities God has given us: ſo, when they are meaner, ſince they are of his ordering, we muſt keep his way, and do no evil thing, particularly not break the Order and Unity of the Church, to find better.

Queſt. I ſee God is the giver of every good thing, and therefore we muſt own all that comes well to us any way, as his Gift and Bleſſing.

Anſ. Yes, both when we receive, and as often as we ſpeak of them. We ſhould not forget to thank God on all good occurrences, though coming to us from ſeeming accidents, or the hands of our Neighbours. Nor ſhould we forget to do the ſame, on all relations of them unto others; but in ſpeaking of any Bleſſings, or comfortable Enjoyments, think a ſerious *God be thanked*, moſt ſeemly and ſavory in all Pious Perſons mouths. *Queſt.*

Queſt. But as God's Providence orders for us all good events, doth he likewiſe order for us all evil ones?

Anſ. Yes, whether thoſe that come upon us by accident, or by ill Men, that are either private to our ſelves, or publick and common to the whole Church or Nation. *Out of the mouth of the moſt high, proceedeth not evil, and good?* Lam. 3. 38. And *ſhall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?* Amos 3. 6.

Queſt. When our Friends die, is that through Providence, and doth God take them?

Anſ. Yes, albeit they are ſnatched away untimely by evil accidents, which, though caſual to us, are foreſeen and ordered by him. In his hand are life and death, ſo that whenſoever our Friends die, he calls them. And this muſt teach us patiently to bear their loſs; yea, moreover, to truſt him to make up the want of them ſome other ways, though their life ſeemed not only very uſeful, but almoſt neceſſary to us. For let our Friends be as uſeful, as they will; they are only his inſtruments. It is he that gives them, both the inclination, the skill, and the opportunity to help us. And he, that ſupplied us by them, can ſupply us without them: he can, when he pleaſes, raiſe up others, or put us into a way and capacity to provide for our ſelves. So that no Perſon can be Friendleſs, but is rich in Friends, who has a

Friend

Friend of God, and is under a good Providence. And one of the ſureſt ways to make him a Friend, when others are gone, is to truſt him.

Queſt. This is ſatisfactory, as to the loſs, but oh! the misfortune of the time. For they were taken away juſt then, when we promiſed our ſelves moſt pleaſure in them, which made us moſt deſirous to keep, and loth to part with them.

Anſ. If we believe, that a moſt Wiſe God took them, in all modeſty we ſhould believe too, that he knows what are the moſt convenient, and fitteſt Seaſons, for Friends to part in.

Queſt. I ſee when God takes a Friend from us, we muſt ſubmit, and truſt him. But doth it not ſhew he is angry with us, when he tears a Friend from our ſides?

Anſ. No, perhaps, it is only becauſe he is pleaſed with them, and would take them to himſelf. And we ought not to judge he hates us, for loving thoſe that we love.

Queſt. When we ſuffer by miſchances, or ill accidents, in our Bodies, or Goods, are thoſe ſufferings from Providence?

Anſ. Yes, it not only foreſees, but times the evils to be ready when we are in the way, and orders, and directs them for us. If *the lot* fall againſt us, when 'tis *caſt into the lap, the whole diſpoſal thereof is from the Lord*, Prov. 16. 33. If a Man is accidentally

tally maimed, or *murdered*, 'tis chance-medly and accident in him that hurt, or ſlew him, but deſign in God, who, ſays the *Scripture* in this caſe, *delivered the man into his hand*, Exod. 21. 13. And this muſt teach Men in all unlucky chances, and unfortunate accidents not to vent themſelves in wrath and fooliſh paſſion, againſt the immediate occaſions, whether inanimate things that could not, or undeſigning Perſons that did not intend any ill to them but to look up to God, with humility and patience under what they feel, and thankfulneſs for all they have eſcaped. For in him only the evil accident was deſign; and againſt him, who juſtly can, or dare complain?

Queſt. This is well as to unfortunate accidents. But what if our hopes or happineſs are damped, or our maladies made worſe, yea, perhaps, irremediable, by groſs heedleſneſs, or unkindneſs and hard-heartedneſs, or other exaſperating faultineſs or over-ſights, of our ſeeming Friends, or Servants, or others that are concerned about us? 'Tis eaſier to bear, when we are made miſerable by God's Providence; but it grates hard when their faultineſs makes us ſo, of whom we might well expect better things?

Anſ. Though they are the actors, God's Providence is the orderer of theſe misfortunes: which therefore are to be undergone with the ſame patience. For as a good

good Wife or Husband, ſo a wiſe and good Servant, or Friend, is God's gift. And when God chaſtiſes and ſmites us, by ſuch as are exaſperatingly unkind, or miſchievouſly careleſs, we muſt own his Juſtice in their neglects, and ſubmit to them as we do to a Diſeaſe, that is, reckon them among that burden, or ſhare of ſuffering, which God has allotted for us in this life.

Queſt. Is it Providence ſtill, that ſends us any croſſes, and obſtructions, in our deſigns and buſineſs?

Anſ. Yes, thoſe croſſes come from him, to exerciſe our Faith, where he approves of our purſuits; or to diſappoint and put us by, where he diſlikes them. And this muſt teach us patience, as often as we meet with them.

Queſt. 'Tis enough, indeed, to ſtop all complaints, that any thing is of his doing. But can you ſay moreover, that theſe croſſes are for ends both of Grace, and Wiſdom?

Anſ. Yes, to all thoſe that love him. If they come to defeat their projects, they ſhall ſee at laſt that is in favour to them: or if only to backen them, that is, but to reſpite them for a more advantageous iſſue at a fitter ſeaſon; nay, perhaps, theſe ſeeming backners, will at laſt appear the trueſt promoters to help them on. If Men will have patience till all is done, their croſſes and miſadventures will appear moſt orderly, proper, and beautiful in their time,

when

when they have ſeen on to the end of the chain, and viewed the whole frame and dependance of God's ordering. And therefore upon any croſs occurrences, Men muſt not be haſty in judging, to diſcourage and diſcontent their hearts: but wait God's time with Patience, Hope, and implicite Faith, till the end of things diſcovers his moſt Wiſe, and Gracious Purpoſe.

Queſt. But what if in the height of our hopes, and probabilities, ſome croſs accident ſtarts up, that is like to break all our meaſures?

Anſ. If God ſees good to make our hopes take place, he can make our croſſes carry on our deſires to advantage. For 'tis his Prerogative to *bring light out of darkneſs*; to make uſe of *weak things to worſt the ſtrong, and of fooliſh things to confound the wiſe*, 1 Cor. 1. 27. And he has declared, that *all things ſhall work together for good, to thoſe that love God*, Rom. 8. 28. But then they muſt commit their caſe to his conduct, and truſt him with it.

Queſt. But the evil accident happens at that very time, which of all others ſeems moſt unſeaſonable, and fit to pull down all they have been ſo long a building up?

Anſ. Though it doth, to God the eaſineſs of accomplithing his Gracious Purpoſes, is ſtill the ſame. It only gets him the greater Glory, in making the croſſeſt events ſerve ſuch turns, as are beſide all expectation.

expectation, and he chuſes to work by ſuch improbable means, to ſhew his overruling Wiſdom. What, in appearance, could be worſe timed, than the diſſenſion of *Paul* and *Barnabas*, two chief Miniſters, in an Infant-Church. Yet this God turned to the furtherance of the Goſpel, by dividing them, like two great Streams, for the watering of more Countries; *Paul going through Syria and Cilicia*, and *Barnabas to Cyprus*, Act. 15. 39, 40, 41. And therefore we muſt never be immoderately troubled, or dejected, at private, or publick miſchances, falling out moſt unſeaſonably to croſs our hopes, either for our particular Intereſts, or for God's Holy Church. For when God is ingaged for us, he over-rules, as the greateſt evils, ſo the croſſeſt ſeaſons too to ſerve his own purpoſe.

Queſt. Sickneſs, loſs of friends, and croſſes and miſchances, that could not be foreſeen, I ſee plainly are the Hand of God. But when we ſuffer from ill Men, are thoſe evils alſo of God's ſending?

Anſ. Yes, for *the wicked are God's ſword*, Pſal. 17. 13. He over-rules the moſt troubleſom, and ungodly Men, to ſerve his own turn: *the Lord hath made*, or diſpoſed *all things for himſelf, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil*, that is, to vent themſelves there, where he ſees fit to ſend evil, *Prov.* 16. 4. They are his inſtruments, whereby he either exerciſes our patience, or corrects our diſobedience.

Queſt.

Queſt. If 'tis God that afflicts us by them, and they are but as a Rod or Inſtrument in his Hand; when they deſign to vex, and hurt us, he can put by their deſign?

Anſ. Yes, and often doth; as he put by *Abimelech* from *committing wickedneſs*, by a *terrifying dream*, Gen. 20. 3, 6. and *Pharaoh*, by *ſending great plagues upon him*, Gen. 12. 17. His Providence can at any time throw in their way a diſcouraging reaſon, a diverting fear, an inward relenting, or expoſe ſome other object to their hurtful paſſion, and divert it from him it fixed firſt upon. Even *the heart of kings*, ſays *Solomon*, who, having no Superiours here, ſeem moſt of all left to their own wills, *are in God's hand* to derive into any channels or courſes, *as the rivers of water* are in the Husbandman's, to bring them over what part of his Ground he pleaſes, *Prov.* 21. 1. whereof we have abundant inſtances, both in Holy *Scripture*, and *Experience*.

Queſt. And when they are fully fixed to do us hurt, yet ſince they are under his conduct and direction, let them deſire, and endeavour it as much as they will, they cannot do us any hurt before his time?

Anſ. That is very right. And this was plain in the *wicked Jews*, who, though they ſought with all their might to *kill Chriſt*, yet either he *ſecretly withdrew himſelf*, at the very point of time, when *they thought to lay*

hands on him, Luke 4. 29, 30. or the *officers* hearts relented, who were *ſent to apprehend him*, John 7. 32, 44, 45, 46. or they were providentially ſtruck with a ſtartling *fear*, that *the People*, who *held him for a Prophet*, would riſe upon them, *Matth.* 21. 46. Some thing, or other, ſtood always ready to put them by, *becauſe his hour was not yet come*, John 7. 30. But when God's own time drew on, his Providence, which was a Wall of Braſs about him before, laid him open to their ſpite, and then they wrought their wills upon him: *this is your hour, and the power of darkneſs*, Luke 22. 53. And ſo it was alſo in *Job's caſe*. Whilſt *God ſet an hedge about him*, no Enemy could annoy him: and till God had ſaid, *all he has is in thine hand*, Satan himſelf could not bring his miſchievous inſtruments, the *Sabaans*, and *Chaldeans* upon him, *Job* 1. 10, 12, 15, 17.

Queſt. And when that time is come, can they exceed his bounds, or afflict further than he has allowed them?

Anſ. No; for though the *Jews*, to increaſe *Chriſt's* pain, deſigned to *break his legs*, as well as the Legs of the other Malefactors, as *he hung upon the croſs:* yet, by the ſpeedineſs of his death, God prevented them, to *fulfil the Scripture, which ſaith, a bone of him ſhall not be broken*, John 19. 33, 36. And when the *Corinthians* were full of fears, and apprehenſive of great trials,

S. *Paul*

S. *Paul* tells them, *God is faithful, and will not ſuffer you to be tempted above what ye are able, but will make a way to eſcape* ſo much of *the temptation*, as would prove over-hard for you, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. And this has been the general experience of God's Servants, who, as S. *Paul* ſpeaks, might *be troubled on every ſide, but not diſtreſſed; perplexed, but not in deſpair; perſecuted, but not forſaken; caſt down, but not deſtroyed*, 2 Cor. 4. 8, 9.

Queſt. And as God ſtints the meaſure, as well as appoints the ſeaſon, doth he alſo fix the length and duration of our ſufferings from evil Men?

Anſ. Yes, that is not left to their malice, but as ſoon as our ſufferings have accompliſhed God's ends, he will take care to alter the counſels, and courſe of things. *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reſerve the unjuſt to the day of judgment to be puniſhed*, 2 Pet. 2. 9. And in proportioning this continuance, he uſes great care, and tenderneſs to his Servants, that their ſufferings may not outlaſt their patience, or wear out their hope in him. *The rod of the wicked ſhall not reſt*, or make a fixt abode, and ſtay too long *upon the lot of the righteous, leſt* it put them upon deſperate counſels, *and the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity*, Pſal. 125. 3.

Queſt. If wicked Men are thus an inſtrument in God's Hand, then whatever evils we ſuffer from them, we muſt not

look only at the immediate actors, but see beyond them to Almighty God, and own his Providence.

Anſ. Yes, and that will not only teach us to pleaſe him, and to apply our ſelves to him for redreſs; but teach us patience too, becauſe how undeſerved ſoever they may be from others, yet we have deſerved a thouſand times worſe at his hands. *Let him curſe*, ſays *David* of *wicked Shimei*, and would return no ill again, *for the Lord hath bidden him*, 2 Sam. 16. 10, 11. and *I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it*, Pſal. 39. 9. nay, it will teach us willingneſs in ſubmiſſion. For be the Cup untoothſome, and bitter as Gall and Wormwood: yet he is both *our God*, and *our Father*, that offers it, and we ſhould not ſuſpect any hurt, in what comes from his Hand. *The cup, which my Father hath given me, ſhall I not drink it?* ſaid our Bleſſed Lord of the unparallelled injuries he ſuffered, *John* 18. 11.

Queſt. But if, when Men wickedly afflict us, you ſay, God ſends theſe afflictions; will it not excuſe them to ſay, God gives them ſucceſs againſt us, and they follow Providence?

Anſ. No, in no wiſe. For God doth not excite, or tempt them to injure us. But when they are injurious of themſelves, his Providence ſets us in their way, that their wickedneſs may ſpend it ſelf upon us,

us, to exerciſe our Faith and Patience, or to chaſtiſe our diſobedience. So that they are accountable for their own wickedneſs, and when they will be wicked, all he doth is to over-rule it to ſerve his own deſigns: as he did in the murder of our Bleſſed Saviour, which he *ordered* for the Salvation of the World, though the *Jews ſlew him by wicked hands*, Act. 2. 23. When we ſuffer by other Mens ſins, God, who puniſhes us by them, will puniſh them for them, as he declared of *the Aſſyrian, the rod of his indignation*, *Iſ.* 10.5, 12, 17. and as all wicked Slanderers, Oppreſſors, Thieves, Rebels, and Murderers, ſhall find to their coſt in the end. It is not acting ſucceſsfully, but acting according to our Duty, which will juſtifie what we do, when God comes to judge us.

Queſt. But if 'tis Providence, that ſends wicked and violent Oppreſſors, ſince it is the Patron of Juſtice, as well as the Chaſtiſer of Undutifulneſs ſure God will not continue to ſuch Men the Power to oppreſs always?

Anſ. No; the more violent and boiſterous any wicked Oppreſſor is, the ſooner will his Power fail him, and ſpend it ſelf. *The wicked* Oppreſſor, ſays *Solomon*, *paſſes as a whirl-wind*, which may for a while ſtorm terribly, and bluſter, but is quickly over, *Prov.* 10. 25. *The rod of his anger ſhall fail*; that is, the Might, or even the Authority

whereby he ſcourges, ſhall not bear him out, or preſerve him in unjuſt violence: but by abuſing Power, he ſhall ſoon loſe it, and then reap that trouble he has juſtly deſerved, *Prov.* 22. 8. And therefore when any are oppreſſed by Potent Neighbours, or Men of Violence, they may ſupport themſelves to think, that God ſees all their wrongs, and in due time will give them eaſe.

Queſt. I ſee, thoſe evils, which befal our ſelves in our own particulars, are the allotment of Providence. But if there be any miſcarriages of State and Government, muſt the People look upon theſe too to be of God's ſending?

Anſ. Yes, and generally as a puniſhment for the wickedneſs, and provocations of a Nation. *For the tranſgreſſions of a land, many are the princes thereof*, Prov. 28. 2. And through *the anger of the Lord* being *kindled againſt Iſrael, God moved David*, that is, left him to be won by * *Satan* moving him, *to number the people*, 2 Sam. 24. 1. So that in any publick miſcarriages, we muſt not ſpend our ſelves in exclaiming againſt Miniſters of State, and the Inſtruments concerned therein: but look up to the Juſtice of Almighty God, and reflect with patience, and penitent hearts, upon our own ſins, which are puniſhed in them.

* 1 Chron.

Queſt. But muſt we think God's Providence directs and diſpoſes, when Publick Affair

Affairs are moſt tumultuary and irregular, and ſeem to ſhew forth feweſt footſteps of his perfections?

Anſ. Yes, *the Lord reigns, though the people tremble* through convulſive and diſtracting fears; *he ſitteth between the cherubims, though the earth be moved* with the violence of ſtirs and tumults, *Pſalm* 99. 1. And this muſt ſupport all good Men in the moſt dangerous, and diſtracted times, becauſe even then they are ſtill under God, and are not at the Mercy of all the ill chances and threatning evils, that fly round about them, which, how looſe ſoever they may ſeem to fly abroad, are yet all bound up in God's Hand.

Queſt. If 'tis God, that ſends all theſe evils, then whenſoever any of them threaten and hang over us, we muſt look up to him, and have Faith in his Providence.

Anſ. Yes, and that too, though we ſeem reduced almoſt to irremediable extremities. For God loves to delay deliverance to the laſt, that our Faith and dependance, may be more throughly tried; and then ſhows himſelf neareſt to us, when we have no more hope left in our ſelves, or in any humane means. Thus he appeared not to *ſave Iſaac's life*, till *Abraham's hand was ſtretched out* to take it away, *Gen.* 22. 10, 11. And then God comes as a *preſent help*, when we are in the very *time of need*,

Pſalm 46. 1. & Heb. 4. 16. He chuſes the time of our diſtreſs, to give us a more affecting ſenſe of our deliverance. And then too he often works it, by thoſe very things, which ſeem not only unprofitable, but oppoſite, and apt to hinder it: that no part of the honour of it may go to humane means, but that the whole of it may be aſcribed to himſelf.

Queſt. You have ſhown that God orders all thoſe ill events, which croſs accidents, or ill Men bring upon us. But what ſay you to thoſe, which we bring upon our ſelves, by our own groſs faults, or follies? Muſt they be aſcribed to God's Providence?

Anſ. No; this *Solomon* taxes in fond ſinners, that when *the fooliſhneſs of man perverteth his way*, and he *falls* becauſe he is *Ignorant*, or rath and *haſty with his feet:* yet for all this, *his heart fretteth againſt the Lord*, as if not his own pure folly, but God had brought him to it, *Prov.* 19. 2, 3. The moſt Holy God forbids all our faults, and the moſt Wiſe God diſclaims all our follies, which we muſt not aſcribe to him, but take to our ſelves. As all Perſons muſt do, when they throw away themſelves in fooliſh Marriages, or throw away their Eſtates by extravagance, and fooliſh projects, or are any other ways the direct Authors of their own miſeries, which they bring upon themſelves by going againſt his

his will, either in ſuch ſins as he forbids, or in ſuch follies as he diſapproves. When our calamities are thus of our own ſeeking, we muſt not remove the blame from off our ſelves by caſting it on God, and ſay they are of his ſending. *Say not thou*, as the *wiſe ſon of Sirach* moſt piouſly and juſtly cautions, *it is through the Lord that I fell away; for thou oughteſt not to do the things, that he hateth. Say not thou, he hath cauſed me to err:* for *he hath no need of the ſinful man*, Eccluſ. 15. 11, 12.

Queſt. By this I perceive, when any Perſons have made a fooliſh Marriage, or otherwiſe done fooliſhly for themſelves; you would not have them ſay, as too ordinarily they do, that ſuch match was made in Heaven, and is what God had decreed for them.

Anſ. No, by no means. For that is only to make God accountable for their faults. And is it fit, when they are aſhamed of a thing, to lay it upon God to excuſe themſelves? God bids no Man do fooliſhly, or wickedly; nor tempts him to it. *Let no man ſay, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God. For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither doth he tempt any man*, James 1. 13.

Queſt. But doth God no way allot theſe for us?

Anſ. Yes, he allots the miſeries as a puniſhment, after we have been ſo faulty, or fooliſh: but he doth not allot that fooliſh

liſh miſcarriage, whereby we bring the miſery upon our heads. For God is not the Author, either of the ſins, or follies of Men, being in himſelf all Holineſs, and Wiſdom. What is well done by us, we muſt aſcribe to him, but all that is ill, we muſt take to our own ſelves.

Queſt. But is he not ſometimes concerned in ſending Mens faults and follies too, as well as the miſeries, in puniſhment of former provocations? For when Men have been great ſinners, he is oft provoked, as you noted above, to withdraw his Grace in juſt Judgment, and leave them to themſelves, whence they fall ſtill into more folly, and wickedneſs.

Anſ. Yes, by way of puniſhment, God ſometimes gives Men up thus to ſin, and folly. Not that he tempts, or inclines Men, to be either fooliſh, or wicked, as I ſaid: but that, when they are throughly prepared of themſelves to be ſo, in his juſt Judgment he withdraws his abuſed Grace, the continuance whereof might help to prevent it, and leaves them to themſelves, and the incitation of evil Spirits, as I have before declared.

Queſt. So that if any Perſons would aſcribe any ſhare in their miſcarriages to God, it muſt only be in owning his Juſtice, and taking ſhame to themſelves, confeſſing he Righteouſly gave them up to them, in puniſhment of former ſins?

Anſ

Anſ. Yes.

Queſt. You have inſtanced in fooliſh Marriages: and I ſee we muſt not impute them to Deſtiny, and God's irreſiſtible Decrees, which is only a throwing the blame on God to clear our ſelves. But do not you think, that the Providence of God, which numbers even the Hairs of our Heads, is more than ordinarily concerned in making Marriages, which are an affair of higheſt importance?

Anſ. I make no doubt of it. *Houſes, and lands, are the inheritance of fathers; but a prudent wife is from the Lord*, Prov. 19. 14. & 18. 22. But when God's Providence orders, and accompliſhes Marriages, it is not by fate, and irreſiſtible ways; but only by affording ſuch opportunities and inducements, as, though oft-times they may very potently induce, yet leave a liberty in the Perſons themſelves, I ſuppoſe, eſpecially ere they are ſuffered to proceed too far, to refuſe. When God brings them about, it is in a way agreeable to free Creatures, who have a liberty to refuſe, and voluntarily of themſelves take hold of theſe offers and facilitating turns of Providence, to bring about their own Marriages; whence, being a matter of their own doing, they are accountable for them, and deſerve Praiſe when they beſtow themſelves wiſely, and blame when they do fooliſhly.

Queſt.

Queſt. As for all the actions, which we do then, I perceive we muſt believe that God obſerves them. And as for all the good or ill events, which we meet with, we muſt believe he orders and allots them for us, and be accordingly affected with them?

Anſ. Yes, and that is *walking before God*, as *Abraham* was bid to do, *Gen.* 17. 1. and owning Providence, which is the ground of all Religion, and the great Character through all the *Scriptures* of good Men: and is not only the perfection of our affection, and ſervice to Almighty God; but the only ground of ſolid comfort and tranquillity of mind, under all the various accidents of this World.

Queſt. Is this Great, and Good God, that made, and ſtill preſerves, and carefully provides for us, not only our Friend, but alſo *our Father?*

Anſ. Yes, he is the Father of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, and, for his ſake, he is *our Father* too. And ſo he has taught us to call him, and pray, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c.

Queſt. What muſt this teach us?

Anſ. Not only to take the freedom of acceſs, and the confidence; but withal to pay the Reverence, and dutiful Obedience of Children. *If I be a father, where is mine honour?* Mal. 1. 6. To imitate the ways and virtues of our Heavenly Father, and turn

turn *followers of God as dear children*, Eph. 5. 1. this being a Natural Fruit of Spiritual, as it uſually is of Secular Relation. It muſt engender noble thoughts and purſuits, worthy of this high Alliance, and not ſuffer us to debaſe our ſelves, and diſhonour our Race, by ſinking into ſenſuality, or doting on, and taking up with any vain and periſhing goods of this life. In ſumm, it muſt cauſe us to depend on him, with truſt and affiance; to receive what he ſends, with ſubmiſſion, and cheerfulneſs, and an opinion that it proceeds from kindneſs; with other ſuch like, which are filial tempers.

Queſt. And this *God*, and *Father*, the Creed ſays, is *Almighty*, and *the maker of Heaven and Earth.*

Anſ. Yes, that is added, and is next in courſe to be explained.

Of

Of God's Almightineſs.

CHAP. III.

Of God's Almightineſs.

The Contents.

God's Almightineſs implies, 1. *God's Might and Strength to effect all things,* viz. *all that are the object of any Power. And that are not repugnant to his own Nature. The exerting this Power creates God no labour. He can do, whatſoever any things of the World can do. This an encouragement to all generous Enterprizes. And to build on Providence, eſpecially where we have a Promiſe. The value and acceptance of this truſt, in a ſeemingly moſt improbable caſe. And whatſoever any things of the World are inclined, or wont*

to do, he can hinder them from doing. This alſo a ground of truſt in God. And to keep us in any diſtreſs, from flying to unlawful aids. How God will uſe this Power. 2. *His Sovereignty and Power, to command, and order all things. This includes,* 1. *Empire, as a Sovereign Ruler. What things God may command. The unalterableneſs of ſome commands.* 2. *Dominion, as a Sovereign Proprietor. In what caſes God allots good and ill, out of his Power of Prerogative, not according to Mens pre-diſpoſitions. Where he diſpenſes Arbitrarily, he doth it always moſt Wiſely, and Reaſonably. Saving Grace he allots, not in way of Arbitrary Prerogative, but according to Covenant Rules. And Heaven and Hell, in way of Legal Trials. A brief account of the Rectitude of God's Nature, which limits his Sovereign Will, from the Scriptures. This Sovereign Lord and Proprietor an All-ſufficient, ſo no ſelfiſh Being. Several good uſes of God's Sovereign Dominion. God's Majeſty and Almightineſs, muſt beget fear and reverence.*

Queſtion. THE *Almighty* Power of God, is one thing particularly profeſſed in the *Creed*, and when God would give a Character of himſelf, he told *Abraham* he was *the Almighty God*, Gen. 17. 1. Is this Attribute of ſo great account, that in ſo ſhort a Summary it ſhould be ſingled out, and particularly mentioned?

Anſ.

Anſ. Yes, for ſince God has an Almighty Power over all, all muſt fear and ſubmit to him. Since he is able to do all things, his Friends and Servants have cauſe to truſt in him, and depend on him, and in all their wants to ſeek and addreſs to him for convenient ſupplies. So that his Almighty Power, is a main ground of all Religious Service, of Fear, and Faith, or Truſt in God, and all Devotion.

Queſt. What is meant by God's Almightineſs?

Anſ. Two things: 1. That he has Might and Strength, to effect and do. And, 2. That he has Sovereignty and Power, to command and order all things.

Queſt. Has God all Might and Strength, to effect and do all things?

Anſ. Yes, all that are the object of any Power, and all that are not repugnant to his own Nature. He made all this World, and can at his Will make more; and *nothing ſhall be impoſſible with God*, Luke 1. 37.

Queſt. Why do you ſay all that are the object of any Power?

Anſ Becauſe contradictions are the object of no Power: and though an Almighty Arm muſt be ſufficient for one part of them, as who, by his bare Word, can at his Will ſpeak all things, either out of, or into nothing; yet it is no way concerned to fulfil both at the ſame time. Thus is it

no

diminution to the Power of God, that it cannot make twice two ceaſe to be four, or that which is paſt not to have been, or one and the ſame Body to be at once in many and far diſtant places, and yet under all this multiplicity to be but one, becauſe they all imply a contradiction, that is, that a thing ſhould be ſomewhat, and withal that it ſhould not be it, at the ſame time.

Queſt. And why do you add All that are not Repugnant to his own Nature?

Anſ. Becauſe, as God's power is infinite, ſoe is every other Attribute, and one muſt not deſtroy, or weaken another, but all muſt conſiſt together. Thus, though, as *Chriſt* ſaid, *to God all things are poſſible*, Matth. 19. 26 yet, as St. *Paul* ſaith, *it is impoſſible for God to lye*, Heb. 6. 18. He cannot be ſick, or weary, or ſleepy. He cannot be unjuſt, or cruel, or unfaithful, or delight in ill, or be ignorant of any thing, or change any of his excellencies, or ceaſe to be himſelf, or make other Gods beſides himſelf, or be any other ways imperfect, more than he can be weak and impotent. The properties, and perfections of the Divine Nature, are unalterable by the Divine Power: and it is no more a matter of God's Power, to hinder himſelf from being Pure, or Juſt,

or Good; than it is in the power of the Sun, to restrain it self from giving Light; or of the Fire, from giving heat; or of any other thing, from doing what is natural, and necessary to it. Whatsoever the Divine Pleasure can will, that the Divine Power can execute: but God's Will that controuls all things else, doth never contradict his own Nature, but is always suited to, and ruled by it.

Quest. And when God exerts this Power in doing things, doth it create him any labour and pains?

Ans. No, he makes, or unmakes every thing, with a bare *word of his mouth*, as he did at the Creation. We, indeed, are imperfect Natures, and activity spends our Powers; and the things we go to alter and act upon, are stubborn in sticking to their own Natures, and make resistance: on which accounts, our actings cause trouble and weariness. But all things obey every inclination, and tendency of God, with an intire submission; and his Power is Absolute and Infinite, so that if he doth but will any thing, immediately it is done. And therefore it is a vain fancy, and ignorant complement of the *Epicureans* of old, and of all the Enemies of Providence in later times, who would exclude God from the Inspection, Ordering, and Government

ment of the World, in pretence thereby to ſecure his eaſe and ſelf-enjoyment, and to keep back trouble and toil from him.

Queſt. Can God do, whatſoever any things in the World can do?

Anſ. Yes, for he gave them all their Power of doing it. And retaining ſtill the ſame Power in himſelf, which he communicated to them, as he ordinarily doth things by them, ſo, when he pleaſes, can he do the ſame without them. Thus can he preſerve Life without Meat, as he did to *Moſes*, *Elias*, and our *Saviour Chriſt*, in their *forty days faſt*; and reſtore Health, without the help of Phyſick; and give Children to thoſe who are paſt Child-bearing, as he did to *Sarah*; and make a Maid a Mother without the help of a Father, as in the Generation of our *Saviour*; and give us Bodies without all help of Parents, as he did *out of the duſt of the earth* at firſt to *Adam*, and as he will do at laſt to all in the *general Reſurrection*.

Queſt. What muſt this teach us?

Anſ. Not only to believe him in thoſe Articles of Religion, which ſeem hardeſt in Nature to be brought to paſs, as *Chriſt's being born of a virgin*, and the *general reſurrection*: but alſo to take heart and courage,

in all honest and prudent enterprizes, and not suddenly to desist, or despair of success, through the number, and greatness of discouragements. All virtuous, publick, and generous undertakings, are both acceptable and honourable to God, and so more like to have a sure Friend of Providence. And when God espouses any cause, though there be little probability, and preparation for it in Natural appearance, yet will it surely come to pass, since he has the Power and Probability of all his Creatures in himself.

Quest. Indeed, Men so backed, must needs speed designs, where there are fewer visible preparations, and find success beyond appearances.

Ans. Yes, and the prospect of that animated the *Apostles* to go on courageously in *converting the World*, an attempt impossible in all human judgment. And all *Ancient*, and *Modern Worthies*, to set on any *Publick Reformation* in evil times, and do the World good against their wills. And all honest Men, whose cause was good, and dear to God, to hope he would stand by it, and restore it, even when they saw it reduced to the last extremities. In summ, in licentious times, it has heretofore, and must still strengthen *Magistrates* in asserting Laws and Justice; and *Ministers*, in preaching

preaching down prevailing errors, and reigning vices; and all *Publick Spirits*, in pursuing Pious, or Charitable Projects; and all *Good Men*, in supporting the oppressed, in curbing vice, in breaking wicked customs, in setting on any great honour of God, or good Men, in their several stations. They must not hastily think they shall not be able to effect, what they have cause to hope God will set forward: but believe, as S. *Paul* said, that *they can do all things, through Christ strengthening them*, Phil. 4. 13. But then their hope and confidence must still be fixed in God, not in themselves, or outward aids: and when they go to meet difficulties, it must be as *David* did to meet *Goliah*, only *in the Name of the Lord of hosts*, 1 Sam. 17. 45.

Quest. Must this consideration, of God's having in him the Power of all his Creatures, teach us any thing else?

Ans. Yes, to trust his Providence for the supply of any wants, especially where he has given us any Word and Promise. Nay, then to hold on trusting, even in the most destitute cases, and against all probabilities. For all things, even the hardest and most improbable, are equally easie unto God, so that nothing must seem improbable, which he declares he will bring about. When Faith and Trust is in Man,

or any Earthly thing, it is ruled by probability. But when it is in a Power Almighty, it makes no difference of likely, or unlikely. As *Abraham*'s Faith did not, when he believed God's Promiſe to *ſend him a ſon*, though at that time, both *Sarah*, and he, were too old in courſe of Nature to have one: and to make that Son a *numerous ſeed*, which he firmly believed at the ſame time he was commanded to offer him up, and ſo could have no Son by him, unleſs he were firſt reſtored to him from the dead.

Queſt. This, indeed, ſhows a high eſteem, and confidence in God, to relie upon his Word when there is not the leaſt ſign of its taking effect, but things look, as if there were no way for it to be effected.

Anſ. Yes, ſo it doth. And therefore among all acts of Religion, there is none that doth more endear Men to God. This *our Father Abraham* found, it being upon this account, that he became ſo dear to God, as to be *called the friend of God*, Jam. 2. 23. and *the father of the faithful*, Rom. 4. 11. 16. and that *his boſom* ſhould be made the *receptacle* of the bleſſed, *Luke* 16. 22. For *his Faith*, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, above all his other virtues, *was imputed to him for righteouſneſs*, Rom. 4. 3. 9. And among all his acts

acts of Faith, thoſe God was pleaſed to impute to him, as the moſt notable, which were ſhown in theſe two difficult inſtances. *He ſtaggered not* at the unlikelihood of his *having a ſon, but was fully perſuaded, that what God had promiſed, he was able to perform: and therefore*, ſaith S. *Paul*, *it was imputed unto him for righteouſneſs*, Rom. 4. 19, 20, 21, 22. And *when he offered Iſaac his ſon upon the altar*, ſays S. *James*, then *the Scripture was fulfilled, which ſaith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteouſneſs: and he was called the friend of God*, Jam. 2. 21, 23. Such is the extraordinary value, and recompence, of truſting God in a ſeemingly moſt improbable, and deſperate caſe, where 'tis viſibly put to a puſh of Omnipotence to make good his Promiſe.

Queſt. I ſee God can do, whatſoever any things in the World can do. But can he alſo hinder any things in the World, from doing whatſoever they are naturally bent, or wont to do?

Anſ. Yes, for as by him they were all made, ſo, as the *Apoſtle* * ſays, in him they ſtill *ſubſiſt*, and *move*, and operate: and therefore whenſoever he pleaſes to ſuſpend, or withdraw their Power, they have no longer uſe of it. Thus the † *fire* could not conſume, nor ſinge *Shadrach*, *Meſhach*, and *Abednego*; nor the * *hungry Lyons* faſten on

* Act. 17. 28.

† Dan. 3. 27.

* Dan. 6. 22.

the *Prophet Daniel*; nor the * *venemous Beast* sting the *Holy Apostle*; nor the † *destroying Angel* touch an *Israelite*; nor the * *Plague*, or *Pestilence*, or other contagious Disease, infect or seize the *Psalmist*; nor the † *wicked Jews* act their spite on our *Saviour Christ*; nor the * *Infernal Spirits* touch *Job*, or try his Patience, whilst God was pleased to withhold them. He suspends the Operations of all hurtful Creatures, evil Men, and wicked Spirits, at his Will: so that they invade no Person, and act at no time, but only when, and so far as he allows them.

* Act. 28 5
† Exod. 12. 13, 23.
* Psal. 91. 1, 6, 7, 8.
† John 7. 30.
* Job 1. 12. & 2. 6.

Quest. And what must this teach us?

Ans. Not hastily to conclude any case of good Men desperate, and incapable of cure, or ease. For when dangers, or disasters, from the most hurtful things, or Persons, threaten most, 'tis but for God to interpose, and either divert, or suspend their power, and then the most fierce and mischievous things become tame and harmless, and the dangers from them little, or none at all. And thus he is wont to interpose for good Men: rescuing them, as he did Holy *David* frequently, out of the very jaws of Death; and saving them, as he did S. *Paul*, after he *had the sentence of death in himself*, 2 Cor. 1. 9.

Quest.

Queſt. But what if we are at the laſt extremities? muſt we hope ſtill, when evil is faſtning upon us, or at the very door?

Anſ. Yes, if we have any expreſs promiſe of deliverance: for God, as I noted formerly, never forgets his Word, though ſometimes he may delay the performance of it to the laſt. Or, if we have an expreſs command for the work, wherein the danger meets us, as S. *Peter* had for *coming to Chriſt upon the water.* For ſince *Chriſt* bid him do the thing, he ſhould have hoped to the end that he would ſtand by him, and therefore was rebuked for *doubting* and *ſtaggering in Faith*, though it were when *the wind was boiſtrous*, ready to bury him in every Wave, and *he* already *began to ſink*, Matth. 14. 29, 30, 31. Or, laſtly, if we have no other claim for relief, but only from God's Providence, whoſe Protection we may generally preſume on in his own ways, and in purſuit of all good and prudent enterprizes: as our *Lord* intimates, when he rebukes *the Apoſtles for want of Faith in fearing Shipwrack*, though they neither had any particular command to Sail, nor expreſs promiſe of a ſafe Voyage, but were to ground this Faith on being under his Protection, and going on lawful Errands, *Matth.* 8. 24, 25, 26. God very commonly

monly ſuffers good Mens dangers, which at laſt he deſigns to remove, to go on firſt to the greateſt extremities, that their Faith and Truſt may paſs through a more full trial, and illuſtrious exerciſe.

Queſt. Muſt it teach us any thing elſe?

Anſ. Yes, *Secondly*, in no caſe to forſake God, and fly to any Foreign and unlawful Aids. For if we ſtick to him, this overruling Power, when things are at the worſt, can with a Word put all the evil by, and reſcue us. And if we forſake him, he can as eaſily turn that Power againſt us, and make us fall by our own ſuccours. For as this Almighty Arm, is able to bring all things about for us; ſo, when it pleaſes, can it alſo bring them about againſt us, in ſpite of all probabilities.

Queſt. This is a ſtupendious height of Power: how will God employ it?

Anſ. In making good all his Promiſes, and executing all his Threatnings, heaping Favours on his Friends and faithful Servants, and Judgments on his Enemies. So that all Holy Men ſhall taſte the ſweetneſs of it, in endearing Providences in this World, as *Jacob*, *Joſeph*, *David*, and the *Patriarchs*, and pious Men of old did: and in Glorious, and endleſs Rewards in the next.

next. And wicked Men ſhall feel the ſmart of it, in all the croſſes, and penal inflictions of this Life, and in the everlaſting torments of the Life to come.

Queſt. If this irreſiſtible Power, were not to be thus juſtly, and kindly uſed, though we ſhould baſely fear and dread, yet ſhould we not love and value him that has it.

Anſ. No, for nothing is ſo hateful, as power in the hands of malice, which makes us have ſuch an utter hatred of the powers of darkneſs. And this muſt teach all ambitious Men, never to covet; and all Potent Men, never to employ their Power, to oppreſs, or tyrannize, to accompliſh unlawful Luſts, or to work their wills on others. But only to encourage Virtue, and reward it, to protect the innocent, relieve the oppreſſed, curb the vicious, or ſome way or other to do good with it.

Queſt. Another Branch of God's Almightineſs, you ſaid, is his *Sovereignty* and Power, to command, and order all things. What mean you by God's *Sovereignty?*

Anſ. His Supreme Authority, being accountable to none, but having Power to order, and injoyn all things, as ſeemeth fitteſt to his own Wiſdom.

Queſt.

Queſt. What doth this imply?

Anſ. Two things: both *Empire*, that is, a Power to injoyn and command as a Ruler; and *Dominion*, that is, a Power to allot and diſpoſe as a Proprietor. God may give any Commands, and exact them of any Perſons, as an abſolute Governour: and make any diſtributions of Things, or allotment of States and Conditions, as an abſolute Lord and Proprietor. And he is Sovereign in both theſe, being bound to pleaſe none, but only to order as ſeems beſt to himſelf.

Queſt. Doth God exerciſe over the World a Sovereign Empire?

Anſ. Yes, all other Rulers, as the *Apoſtle* ſays, are but *his miniſters*, Rom. 13. 4. but he ſtill keeps the controlling Power, and the Reins of Government in his own Hands, being *the bleſſed, and only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords*, 1 Tim. 6. 15. *He hath prepared his throne in heaven, and his kingdom ruleth over all*, Pſalm 103. 19. And this Empire he exerciſes, in giving and exacting all Commands, and guiding and directing all Actions, and turns in the World, as he pleaſes.

Queſt.

Queſt. Has God an abſolute, and unlimited Power, to command all things?

Anſ. Yes, all that his Creatures, by his Grace, are capable of doing; and all that his moſt Holy, and Perfect Nature, is capable of injoyning.

Queſt. Why do you ſay, all his Creatures, by his Grace, are capable of doing?

Anſ. Becauſe his moſt juſt, and equitable Government, cannot impoſe an impoſſible thing. His Laws, indeed, might be impoſſible to us, conſidered naked in our own ſtrength, but not as conſider'd under thoſe aſſiſtances, and that ſtrength, which he is ready to afford us. He doth not reap where he has not ſown, and whatſoever his Laws require, his Spirit will aſſiſt Men to perform, *His commandments are not grievous*, 1 John 5. 3. and *his yoke is eaſie, and its burden light*, Matth. 11. 30.

Queſt. Why do you add alſo, all that his moſt Holy, and Perfect Nature, is capable of injoyning?

Anſ. To ſhew he doth not give Commands out of unlimited Will, and Arbitrarineſs; but doth all according to unalterable Principles of Goodneſs, and Juſtice.

He

He may command whatſoever he will: but then he cannot will all that we may fancy, but only all that is like himſelf, *i. e.* all that is Wiſe, and Good. He never Wills againſt the Perfection of his Nature, becauſe he will do it.

Queſt. I perceive then, that God having commanded Holineſs, and Juſtice, and Mercifulneſs, and Truth, and Faithfulneſs, and the like, which are his own Natural Perfections, there is no poſſibility of his reverſing theſe Commands to ſhew unlimitedneſs of Will, and commanding their contraries.

Anſ. No; in commanding theſe Virtues, he only commands us to be like himſelf: to be *holy as he is holy, perfect* in kindneſs *as he is perfect*, as the * *Scripture* ſays. And being Tranſcripts of his own Perfections, theſe Virtues are a limitation to his Will, and whilſt he is himſelf, he can never will them to be otherwiſe. Indeed, it is his Command, which makes them become duties to us, and inſtances of our obedience: but that, which made him command them, was the Goodneſs they had antecedent to his Command, as being Draughts of his own Perfections. He willed them, becauſe they were Good, and like himſelf. And he being unchangeable, they muſt be always like him. and upon that account he muſt

* 1 Pet. 1. 16. Matth. 5. 48.

muſt always will them; whence they are ſaid to be duties of Eſſential, and Eternal Goodneſs and Obligation.

Queſt. Doth God exerciſe this Empire alſo in guiding, and directing all Actions, and Turns in the World, as he pleaſes?

Anſ. Yes, *he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can ſtay his hand, or ſay unto him, What doeſt thou?* as *Nebuchadnezzar* moſt juſtly acknowledged, when he *returned to himſelf*, Dan. 4. 35. He preſides in all Councils, and directs, and over-rules all Actions and Events. *I form the light, and create darkneſs, I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all theſe things*, Iſaiah 45. 7. And this Adminiſtration of things, is called his Providence, which has already been diſcourſed of.

Queſt. Has God alſo a Sovereign Dominion, to diſpoſe of all things, and aſſot all their different ſtates and conditions, as a Supreme Proprietor?

Anſ. Yes, his Hand made all things, beſtowing upon them both the Workmanſhip and the Materials, and his Power ſtill preſerves them, and all this for what uſes he pleaſes. *Thou haſt created all things, and for thy pleaſure they are, and were created,* Rev.

Rev. 4. 11. *As the clay is in the potters hand, to form it* into a Veſſel either honourable, or baſe, *ſo are ye in my hand, ſaith the Lord,* Jer. 18. 6. *The heaven is his, and the heaven of heavens,* Deut. 10. 14. *the earth, and all the fulneſs thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein,* Pſal. 24. 1. And being thus abſolute, and univerſal a Proprietor, he places and alters, grants and reſumes all things at pleaſure. And when *he takes away,* ſays *Job, who can hinder him, or ſay unto him, What doſt thou?* Job 9. 12.

Queſt. I ſee that all the good and evil, both of this World, and of the next, are in God's Hand, to allot as he ſees fit. Doth he allot them according to any rules, and in recompence of Mens prediſpoſitions: or Arbitrarily, out of Sovereign Will, according as he pleaſes?

Anſ. In allotting the principal things, particularly the Eternal pains and pleaſures of another life, and, in general, all rewards and puniſhments, he has graciouſly bounded his own unlimited Power, by Laws and Compacts. But as for all good and evil things, which are not under Promiſes or Covenants, he diſpenſes them Arbitrarily, as he ſees fit. And as thoſe allotments of good and evil, which he makes in recompence to Mens Deeds, and according to the direction of his own Laws and Promiſes,

miſes, may be called the *Legal Diſtributions*, and *Covenant-Juſtice*: ſo may thoſe, wherein he has not limited himſelf by any ſuch Contracts, be called the *Prerogative Power*, and *Arbitrary Will* of this Almighty Potentate.

Queſt. In what things doth God act with us, out of his *Power of Prerogative*, allotting good or evil things, or ſtates of life, according to his own unlimited Will, and not according to Mens qualities and prediſpoſitions?

Anſ. I do not ſay he acts conſtantly ſo: but oft-times he doth.

1. In allotting Mens different ſtate, and worldly circumſtances: as that one ſhould be born of Noble Parents, to great Fortunes, or honourable Employments, with a well-ſhaped healthy Body, or pregnant parts; and another ſhould be born mean, or ſervile, or ſickly, or mis-ſhaped, or poor, or fooliſh. Thus, when the *Jews* asked the reaſon of a *man's being born blind*, whether *for his parents ſin, or his own*; our Saviour told them there was no need for that, to ſeek out for ſuch precedent deſert, either in him, or them, but 'tis enough to ſay it was, *that the works of God might be made manifeſt in him*, John 9. 2, 3.

2. In allotting their different outward helps for Religion, and Spiritual oppo. tu-

nities; as that one ſhould be born of Chriſtian Parents, trained up in an Orthodox Belief, and pure Worſhip, in the Eyes of good Examples, and under the care of skilful Paſtors; and that another ſhould be deprived of ſome, or, perhaps, of all theſe. Thus, the difference, both in *Secular*, and *Eccleſiaſtical* Priviledges, which God put between the *Jews* and *Edomites*, (*the elder ſerving the younger*, not being intended, or verified of *Jacob* and *Eſau*'s Perſons, *Jacob* rather ſerving *Eſau*, than *Eſau* him, *Gen.* 33. 3. but of their Poſterities, of whom *God* expreſly ſpeaks it, when he firſt declared it to *Rebekah*, Gen. 25. 23. and to whom *Malachy*, from whom alſo S. *Paul* cites this paſſage, doth apply it, *Mal.* 1. 2, 3) this difference, ſays the *Apoſtle*, was an allotment out of *God*'s Sovereign *Will*, and not out of their precedent *deſerts*; God declaring that to *Rebekkah*, *while the children were yet unborn, and had neither done good nor ill*, to prepare them for this diſcrimination, *Rom.* 9. 11, 12, 13. Theſe different allotments, of National Priviledges to *Jews* above *Edomites*, and afterwards, as he * there notes, to *Gentiles* above *Jews*, when the *Jews* were *caſt off*, and the *Gentiles* taken into the Church in their place, was *no unrighteouſneſs in God*, who *hath mercy on whom he will have mercy*, verſe 14. 15.

* Ver. 23, 24, 25, 26.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, to name no more, when he offers what is ſufficient to all, to enable them to do his will if they are not wanting to themſelves, which renders all without excuſe; yet allotting more eminent, and efficacious degrees of Grace to ſome Perſons, and ſhewing more reſpite and forbearance towards ſome offenders, than he doth to others, whom he ſtrikes with a ſwifter vengeance, cutting them off, it may be, in their very firſt attempts. Thus his ſparing *Pharaoh*, and ſtill *raiſing him up* again to a new trial after numerous repulſes, S. *Paul* aſcribes to God's Sovereignty, who *has mercy on whom he will have mercy*, Rom. 9. 17, 18.

In allotting theſe different worldly Circumſtances, and external Priviledges and Opportunities, and more eminent degrees of inward Grace, and ſhewing this different forbearance, God uſes the ſame Prerogative Power, and abſolute Sovereignty over his Creatures, which *the potter doth over the clay*, as S. *Paul* ſays, *forming one veſſel to honour, and another to diſhonour*, not becauſe of any different fineneſs of the matter, but, taking both *out of the ſame lump*, out of his own will and pleaſure, *Rom.* 9. 21.

Queſt. But in theſe allotments, where God diſpenſes Arbitrarily, doth he not always diſpenſe Wiſely, and Reaſonably?

Anſ. Yes, moſt certainly. Mans will is too oft a blind, precipitate reſolution. But God's Will is never without Reaſon, and the higheſt Counſel directs him, where he ſeems moſt Arbitrary in acting. *He works all things, according to the counſel of his own will*, Eph. 1. 11. So that he is ſaid to act out of Will, not as if he did not Will upon good Reaſon, but becauſe that Reaſon is not his being directed ſo by any of his Laws or Covenants, or to recompence any pre diſpoſitions of his Creatures. 'Tis Arbitrary, becauſe uncovenanted, and left to himſelf. But whatſoever is left to him, is ſure to be managed with the higheſt Equity, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, as will appear to all, when we ſhall be let in to behold the Counſel of God's actings.

Queſt. Doth God uſe this Prerogative-Power, in allotting Saving Grace, ſo that one ſhall have the help of his Spirit in a good way, and another ſhall be denied it, though he ſeeks it earneſtly and ſincerely, only becauſe God pleaſes?

Anſ. No, this is under Promiſes and Compacts, and is to be diſpenſed and meaſured out to Men, according to their readineſs to comply with, and their care to ſeek, and make uſe of it. *If any man lack wiſdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men*

men liberally, Jam. 1. 5. *God will give the holy ſpirit to thoſe that ask him*, Luke 11. 13. and *to every one that hath*, that is, improves his *talents*, *ſhall be given*, Matth. 25. 29. Theſe are the Covenant-Rules, for allotting Saving Graces.

Queſt. Or doth he uſe it in allotting Heaven and Hell, and diſpenſing Eternal Rewards and Puniſhments?

Anſ. No, theſe are not given in way of Arbitrary Diſpenſations, but of Legal Trials. At the laſt day, *men muſt all appear before Chriſt, to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether it be good, or bad*, 2 Cor. 5. 10. they muſt *all be judged according to their works*, Rev. 20. 12, 13.

Queſt. So that no Man who lives ill, muſt think that God, to ſhew his Sovereignty, may ſave him if he will; nor any Man, that lives well, fear leſt God, to ſhew his Sovereignty, may damn him if he will; nor if any Perſon ſeriouſly ſets himſelf to be good, muſt he harbour any jealouſie of Prerogative-Power, and Arbitrary decrees againſt him, whereby he ſhould be ſhut out from that Grace, which is neceſſary to help him to be ſo.

Anſ. No, there were not the leaſt danger of that, had we nothing elſe to truſt

to, but the absolute Holiness, Justice, and Goodness, of the Divine Nature. But moreover, in these most important disposals, God acts not out of Arbitrary, unlimited Power, but as he has made himself a Legal, Covenanting Governour, that is graciously pleased to rule the World by Laws and Compacts, and will distribute rewards and punishments according to them. So that in expecting any of these from him, we must not have recourse to any fancied secret Decrees, but only to revealed Promises, and Covenant-Declarations. And these, as I have shown, pronounce Mercy on the good, and Vengeance on the bad, and the Spirit and Grace of God, to all that sincerely and carefully seek after it. In relation to future recompences, saith S. *John*, *God is just*, 1 John 1. 9. And in relation to present assistances, saith S. *Paul*, *God is faithful*, 1 Cor. 10. 13. And in relation to both, saith he again, *God is not unrighteous*, Heb. 6. 10. So making, not absolute Will and Prerogative-Arbitrariness, but Moral Honesty and Covenant-Justice, the ground of Mens expectation from him in these matters.

Quest. You have several times mentioned the rectitude of God's Nature, as well as the voluntary addition of his Laws and Compacts, for the limitation of his Sovereign Will and Power. And the Divine

Divine Nature you have particularly explained before: but I ſhould be glad to have a brief account, of his ways and temper, from the Holy *Scripture.*

Anſ. Thus they repreſent him. *That 'tis impoſſible for God to lie,* Heb. 6. 18. that *he is faithful, and cannot deny himſelf,* 2 Tim. 2. 13. *He is of purer eyes, than to behold iniquity,* Hab. 1. 13. *he hates all workers of it,* Pſalm 5. 5. *He cannot be tempted with evil, nor tempt any man to it,* James 1. 13. *All his ways are judgment, a God of Truth, and without iniquity, juſt and right is he,* Deut. 32. 4. *He regardeth not perſons, nor taketh rewards,* Deut. 10. 17. *He loveth righteouſneſs, and beholdeth the upright,* Pſalm 11. 7. He is *merciful, and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth, keeping mercy for thouſands,* Exod. 34. 6, 7. *God is love,* 1 John 4. 8, 16. And as *he will by no means clear the guilty,* Exod. 34. 7. ſo has *he no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked man turn from his way, and live,* Ezek. 33. 11. Theſe are the Almighty Deities fixt, and immutable Ways, and Principles, which he never thwarts, or contradicts, to ſhew abſoluteneſs of Power and Wilfulneſs.

Queſt. If Almighty God is the Proprietor of all things, and can do what he pleaſes, he muſt be All-ſufficient in himſelf

ſelf, and need no acceſſions from any Body to his Happineſs?

Anſ. So he is. *My goodneſs*, ſaith *David*, *extendeth not to thee*, Pſalm 16. 2. He needs nothing, that any Creatures can offer to him; and if he did, he could ſupply himſelf with them, ſince all the World can preſent him with nothing, but what they have from him.

Queſt. If we are ſo poor, that we can give, and he ſo full, that he can receive nothing; 'tis plain he is no ſelfiſh Being, nor ſeeks any ſeparate Intereſts of his own, by any ſervices we are to pay him.

Anſ. Very true. His ends are only to communicate Happineſs, not to gain it. And this may ſhew Men how unneceſſary their ſcruple is, who fear they are not ſincere in God's Service, if they ſeek thereby to benefit themſelves. For in that, their end is not different, but the ſame with his. They ſeek his Glory, in purſuing their own trueſt good, for in giving, not receiving it is, that he ſeeks to be glorified.

Queſt. What muſt God's Sovereignty, and abſolute Dominion teach us?

Anſ.

Anſ. First, ſince all we poſſeſs, is held under him, never to compaſs any worldly thing by fraud, or falſhood, or any deceitful and diſhoneſt dealing. For ſince God never allows of ſuch, whoſoever come into Poſſeſſions that way, have no conſent, or grant from him. So that whatever they hold, it is not by any Title of Right and Lawful Claim, but only by unjuſt Uſurpation.

Queſt. What do we learn from this abſolute Dominion beſides?

Anſ. Secondly, to be content with that ſtate and condition, and that portion of Goods and Accommodation, which God allots us. For be our part what it will, and other Mens never ſo much above it, as moſt are apt to fancy all their own burthens heavieſt, and their own injoyments leaſt: yet, God having as abſolute Propriety to make one Rich, and another Poor, as the * *Potter* has, *out of the ſame lump, to frame one veſſel to honour, and another to diſhonour*, they muſt needs be moſt rightfully diſpoſed. Yea, moreover, whatever little any of us injoy, in compariſon with others, yet is that little wholly undeſerved; and if from the ſame bounty, which grants us our ſhare, any other Men have more, *our eye muſt not be evil, becauſe God's is good*, Matth. 20. 15.

* Jer. 18. 6. Rom. 9. 21.

Queſt.

Quest. Must it teach us any thing else?

Ans. Yes, *Thirdly*, to be content when he resumes his own allotments. For when he grants us things, he still keeps the Propriety in himself. He makes no *Tenants in Fee*, no, nor so much as *Tenants for Life*: Whatsoever outward things we hold under him, it is all as *Tenants at Will*, to be disseiz'd when he pleases. And therefore whensoever God lends us Health, or Wealth, or Honour, or Friends, or Children, we must injoy them with an apprehension of their being only Loans for a time, and with a readiness to resign them up, when called for again. As good *old Eli did*, who upon an irreparable degradation of his Family, from a state of highest Power and dignity, to the greatest want and meanness, only said, *it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*, 1 Sam. 3. 18. And as *Job*, who upon his sudden and amazing change of fortune, when from the most rich and happy, in a few minutes time he was made the most poor and miserable of all the Men in the *East*, said only, *the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord*, Job 1. 21.

Quest. Must it teach us any thing more?

Ans.

Anſ. Yes, *Fourthly*, to uſe all his allotments to his Honour, whilſt he ſpares them to us. He makes no Proprietors, but only *Stewards*, 1 Pet. 4. 9, 10. And *in ſtewards it is required, that they prove faithful*, 1 Cor. 4. 2. employing what is under their charge, to their Maſters ends, uſe, and intereſt. And therefore no Perſons, to whom God has given Eſtates, muſt think them a priviledge, for being idle, and careleſs; or for ſpending them wholly upon ſports and paſtimes, as if wealthy Perſons were made for no other buſineſs, but diverſions; and much leſs for laying them out in oſtentation of Pride, and Vanity; or in miniſtring to Vice and Luxury. Health, and Wit, and Wealth, and other Temporal advantages, being only Loans of God, are to be Faithfully ſtewarded, and laid out, not ſlothfully neglected, waſted, embezelled, or abuſed.

Queſt. Are we to learn from it any thing further?

Anſ. Yes, *Fifthly*, to be humble, and think modeſtly and ſoberly of our ſelves, under any preeminence of Body, or Parts, Power, or Poſſeſſions. When theſe advantages puff Men up with pride, and vain fondneſs, and ſelf-conceit, they arrogate all the fancied honour and eſtimation of them

them to themſelves, as if they were Proprietors. But when they own them as God's Gifts, and Truſts, and themſelves as holding them only during Pleaſure by uncertain Tenures, they will aſcribe all the Honour of them to him, and learn Modeſty, Care, Dependance, and Thankfulneſs. And withal, never inſult, or deride the want of them in others: remembring, that he who *mocketh the poor*, (and the caſe is the ſame in all other Natural Defects, or Calamities,) *reproacheth his Maker*, who diſpoſed of him in that condition, as *Solomon* ſays *Prov.* 17. 5.

Queſt. By this I ſee *God Almighty* is an immenſly Great Being. How muſt the thoughts of ſuch an irreſiſtible Might, and abſolute Sovereignty affect us?

Anſ. With the greateſt ſubmiſſion of Humility, and Reverence. For ſuch immenſe Greatneſs and Majeſty, ſhould ſtrike us with holy fear and ſubmiſſion in the higheſt degree, every time we think, or ſpeak of this Great God, eſpecially in all acts of Adoration and Worſhip, which we pay to him *Thou muſt fear this glorious, and fearful name, the Lord thy God*, Deut. 28. 58. *He is the excellency of Jacob*, Amos 8. 7. *the moſt high over all the earth*, Pſal. 83. 18. *a great God, a mighty, and terrible*, Deut. 10. 17. *glorious in holineſs, fearful in praiſes, doing*

doing wonders, Exod. 15. 11. *Holy, and reverend is his name*, Pſalm 111. 9.

Queſt. By this Almighty Power, 'tis eaſie to believe God made the World.

Anſ. Yes, thereby *in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*, Gen. 1. 1. And by the ſame Power he ſtill Governs and Preſerves it, as I have before explained.

The End of the Firſt Part.